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BEST FOR JOBS



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Deng the reformer dies at 92

Chinese instability feared after 'beloved comrade passes away'

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

DENG XIAOPING, whose two decades as paramount leader of China brought the country both great economic reforms and the horrors of Tiananmen Square, died last night at the age of 92.

The official announcement came after days of rumours that Deng's health had deteriorated sharply. He was in the advanced stages of Parkinson's disease, complicated by a lung infection, and was reported to have died of respiratory failure after emergency treatment.

A letter to Communist Party members from China's Central Committee proclaimed "with profound grief to the whole party, the whole army and the people of all ethnic groups throughout the country that our beloved Comrade Deng Xiaoping passed away". Last night four armed guards stood outside Deng's residence in a small lane behind the Forbidden City — home to Chinese emperors for 500 years — but there were no other signs of troop movements, and Beijing appeared calm.

Besides being of vital concern to China's 1.2 billion people, Deng's death will cause anxiety in Hong Kong, which reverts to Chinese rule at the end of June. Stability in China is considered essential to Hong Kong's future prosperity, and the news is likely to have a dramatic effect on stock markets all over Asia today.

The Chinese leadership will also be concerned about possible trouble at home. A new leadership is already in place, headed by Deng's chosen successor Jiang Zemin, but transition in China is always fraught with potential danger. A hundred million peasants



Jiang Zemin: Deng's choice as successor

are on the move looking for work in the cities, and there has been ethnic unrest in Xinjiang and Tibet.

As with Mao Tse-tung, there is unlikely to be a gathering of world leaders for Deng's funeral, since China prefers to keep such occasions to itself. A funeral committee has been set up, but the leadership will be concerned to avoid the trouble that can arise when people are allowed to congregate in large numbers — it was the funeral of the deposed party chief Hu Yaobang in 1989 that precipitated the Tiananmen Square demonstrations that were so violently suppressed.

In spite of that dark hour in Deng's leadership, foreign statesmen paid tribute to his achievements in transforming his country. President Clinton described him as an extraordinary figure on the world stage. "Mr Deng's long life spanned a century of turmoil, tribulation and remarkable change in China," he said. "He spurred China's historic economic reform program, which greatly improved living standards in China and modern-

ized much of the nation." Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State who was due to visit Beijing next week, recalled Tiananmen, however, and said that history's assessment of Deng would be mixed.

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Malcolm Rifkind hoped that Deng's political and economic reforms would be consolidated and accelerated under the new leadership. The Foreign Secretary assumed that there would be a short period of uncertainty, but he hoped that would be followed by the stability and prosperity that were vital to Hong Kong.

Deng, who weathered three political purges during his seven decades as a Communist Party member, rose to the pinnacle of power in 1978, two years after the death of his revolutionary mentor, Mao. He inherited a country paralysed by fear and poverty after the Cultural Revolution and gave the people back their lives.

After the austere decade during which millions were persecuted or killed for political reasons, there was an explosion of once-banned

music — from rock to opera — and a cultural opening up.

Deng also set about putting China on the road to a market economy, opening the nation to the outside world and encouraging people to make money. He abolished farming communes, allowed some private enterprises and opened China to foreign investment by establishing special economic zones to produce goods for export.

Under his economic reforms of the 1980s, peasants and workers could for the first time afford to buy television sets, washing machines and refrigerators. But the change also brought envy and social problems as people were laid off from moribund state-run factories, widening the gap between rich and poor.

Corruption also burgeoned, causing wrath among ordinary Chinese who have no great love for the Government or of Deng himself — largely because he was no democrat.

Human rights in China have not marked time with economic reforms, and the leading rights activists Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dan are serving long prison sentences for what the West would consider normal political activity.

It is not anticipated that there will be any liberalisation under Jiang and the premier Li Peng. Li's name is also associated along with Deng's with the crushing of the Tiananmen protests — although Jiang was not involved; he arrived in Beijing later in 1989 from Shanghai where he had handled prodemocracy demonstrations without recourse to violence.

It remains to be seen whether there is any revision of the verdict on Tiananmen or any challenge to the present leadership.



Deng, bringer of reform and repression, died of respiratory failure yesterday

Clouds gather over Hong Kong

FROM JONATHAN MFRSKY IN HONG KONG

CHAIRMAN MAO famously asked: "Who are our enemies and who are our friends?" That is now the question in Hong Kong.

Short, medium, and long-term, Deng Xiaoping's death will rock Hong Kong to its core. The city's future, in the last throes of its 150-year colonial history, suddenly clouds.

The news was not met with the near-disbelief and awe that Mao's death was in 1976, nor did it evoke the sadness that greeted Zhou Enlai's demise earlier that year. Hong Kong people, intensely political, will wonder what to expect before their new Government on July 1.

They recognise the importance of their next leader, Tung Chee-hwa, the Chief Executive-designate, being in Beijing today to seek approval for the list of that government's top officials. Now it will be either scrutinised in haste and approved, or put on hold. But even if those designated do take office on July 1, for how long will they remain?

Mr Tung is in a cauldron of indecision and doubt despite whatever statements are issued in Beijing about the stability of the "core leader", President Jiang Zemin, and those who cluster about him.

Mr Deng was often quoted as saying he intended to be in Hong Kong for the handover ceremony. When his successors stand here for the raising of the red flag, will they be today's leaders, or will there already have been changes?

Tory MP hurt in go-kart accident

BY JILL SHERMAN

MICHAEL JOPLING, the former agriculture minister, was being treated for suspected back injuries last night after an accident at a Lords-Comitons go-karting event in Fulham, London.

He was taken to the nearby Chelsea and Westminster Hospital with suspected fractured ribs and minor breathing problems. His condition was said to be "serious but stable".

A Conservative party source said efforts were being made to contact Mr Jopling's wife Gail, who is abroad. The MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale has already announced his intention to retire at the next election.

Clarke is isolated as Rifkind and Major harden the line on EMU

BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND JANET BISH

KENNETH CLARKE was left isolated last night after Malcolm Rifkind broke the Cabinet truce on Europe and said that the Government was hostile to a European single currency.

In a shift that delighted many Conservative MPs, the Foreign Secretary said that the Government was not neutral on monetary union but "on balance hostile". It was the most Eurosceptic line so far adopted by a senior minister, departing from the agreed position that ministers do not take sides on the merits of the single currency.

Despite a swift rebuttal

from the Chancellor, who said that Mr Rifkind had made a "slip of the tongue under pressure", the Foreign Secretary stood his ground and was implicitly supported by the Prime Minister, who said that it was for the supporters of the single currency to show that it was "positively beneficial" for Britain to join.

In an interview with *The Times* today, Mr Clarke makes a passionate defence of the wait-and-see line that has held the Cabinet together, adding that there could be "very considerable advantages" for Britain in joining.

The Chancellor says that European politicians are increasingly jealous of Britain's position. "There is quite a bit

of envy of our options because, the nearer you get to the decision, the more you face up to very important judgments about where you think your economy is going to go for the next few years."

He adds: "I think there could be very considerable advantages for the United Kingdom in joining a successful economic and monetary union. For that reason, we keep our option genuinely open and I can foresee Britain being a member, I can foresee Britain not being a member."

"This is always described as 'wait and see' as though one should not make some snap decision. I actually think it would be a terrible mistake to decide one way or the other

now because you would be ruling out the possibility of making a judgment that could have a vital effect on jobs and prosperity some time in the future. So we remain open-minded on the subject."

The astonishing spectacle of Mr Major's two most senior ministers contradicting each other in public dismayed Conservative Party chiefs because it provided a graphic reminder of the divisions of recent years only weeks from the election.

Pro-Europeans accused Mr Rifkind of trying to enhance his leadership credentials with his leadership credentials with

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"He was your tax inspector. You must know where it is"

Taxman jailed

Michael Alcock, the taxman convicted of taking a string of bribes, was sentenced to five years in jail. MPs condemned the sentence, claiming that it showed that white collar crime does pay. Page 3

Churchill must share \$10m inheritance with wife

BY ANDREW PIERCE AND TOM RHODES



Harriman: Van Gogh left to US museum

WINSTON CHURCHILL, who spent most of his life living in the shadow of his glamorous mother Pamela Harriman, was left \$10 million (£6.2 million) in her will, it was disclosed yesterday.

But in the will, signed only one month before her death last month, Harriman stipulated that he must share the estate with Minnie, his estranged wife.

Harriman, the former US Ambassador to France, was the lover of some of the world's richest men but took a dim view of her son's decision to leave his wife of 31 years for another woman in 1994.

The displeasure of the thrice-married

Harriman was underlined by the decision to leave her most valuable asset, Van Gogh's *White Roses*, valued at £90 million, to the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

The inheritance comes two years after Mr Churchill, 56, received £12.5 million of National Lottery funds to secure his grandfather's papers for the nation, although most historians assumed the country already owned them.

It will soften the blow of the collapse of Mr Churchill's political career which appeared absolute yesterday. His constituency, Daventry, has disappeared in the boundary changes. When Mr Churchill left his wife in 1994 for Luce Danielson, his conservative association

was so appalled it cancelled a lunch to celebrate his 25th year as an MP.

Pressure grew on Mr Churchill last night to pay back the lottery millions. Brian Wilson, a Labour frontbencher, said: "This confirms that Mr Churchill doesn't exactly need the lottery money. Perhaps he should examine his conscience."

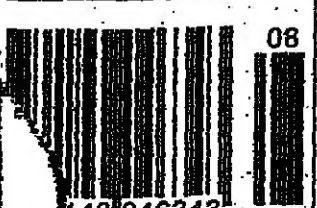
Harriman's four grandchildren each receive \$250,000 (£156,000) and Lord Digby, her brother, was left \$100,000. The two gardeners, the butler, the cook and the chauffeur were bequeathed as much as \$20,000 each in the will. But Janet Howard, a constant companion and personal assistant since 1980, is left without a cent.



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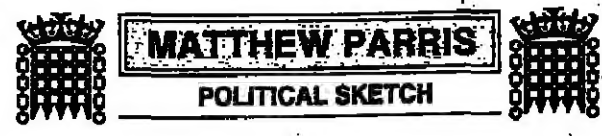
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هكذا من لاصح

When viewers seem to matter more than views

Peter Butler certainly knows how to flatter a girl. Rising yesterday to propose a Bill to ban intruders from schools, the Tory member for Milton Keynes NE fixed Betty Boothroyd with adoring gaze. "A generation ago, Madam Speaker," he began, "when you and I were at school..." Mr Butler is 46. Miss Boothroyd is 67.

Earlier, she had found herself in a new predicament. Everybody knows that some MPs speaking in the chamber are less concerned with making sense to other MPs than with how they may look at six o'clock on television. Tony Blair's habit of turning his Question into a soundbite has become famous. But



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

a convention that MPs are addressing each other, through the chair, is politely maintained.

Until yesterday. For no apparent reason, Robin Corbett, an Opposition spokesman on Industry, began: "May I assure those who watch this programme on their TVs... that Labour will show who is better able to govern?"

There was laughter. We were amused partly by Mr Corbett's gaffe, and partly by the vanity of his supposition that, were Industry Questions to be on television at all (which was unlikely), anybody would be watching Mr Corbett.

This is not a man with any obvious aptitude for the small screen. Tall and unwieldy, with

scraggy hair and a haphazard turn of speech, the MP for Erdington might just be employable as an extra in a gardening programme, or in a walk-on part in *One Man and His Dog*, but would be well advised not to give up his daytime job yet.

Miss Boothroyd looked cross, but said nothing.

She looked crosser when the Tories' Sir Irvine Patrick (Sheffield Hallam) began his question on fireworks safety: "I hope, in this programme, Madam Speaker..."

At least Sir Irvine was addressing the camera via the chair. It was possible to hear in his patter an echo of that chap who used to do *The Good Old Days*, or to imagine him as a television conjuror, or with finger-puppets, or an emu.

"In this theatre, or chamber..." he remarked. "Or studio," shouted someone. He tried a fireworks joke. "Damp squib," granted Nicholas Winterton (C, Macclesfield), for the cameras. "I want to hear the jokes,"

Better vetting urged after HIV-positive doctor dies

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

HEALTH authorities yesterday demanded the introduction of stringent health checks for doctors after the death of an HIV-positive gynaecologist exposed failings in hospital recruitment practices.

Three NHS hospitals that employed 28-year-old Nigerian Olukayode Fasawe, who died last week, yesterday admitted that they did not ask him whether he had been exposed to the risk of infection by the AIDS virus.

The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts said: "It is up to trusts to be as stringent as possible in exploring the background of employees. Trusts don't want to expose themselves to the risk of being sued."

The Royal Devon and Exeter Healthcare NHS Trust said yesterday that it would review its procedures for checking the health of employees but insisted the risks of passing on HIV infection were minuscule. Dr Fasawe, a locum junior doctor who started work at the hospital on February 5, was passed as fit after undergoing the standard pre-employment medical, used by most NHS trusts, which included a questionnaire about his health.

However, there was no specific question about HIV. The closest to it was the question: "Are there any circumstances, illnesses or conditions you



Dr Rosemary Geller, whose baby was treated by the doctor, said that the risk of transmission was minute

have which could affect your performance at work?"

Dr Fasawe went sick three days later and died at his flat in Exeter last week. An inquest in Exmouth yesterday was told that a post-mortem examination was carried out but no cause of death was given. The inquest was adjourned.

Dr Fasawe answered similar questionnaires at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital where he worked as a locum gynaecologist from last August until February 4 and at the Frimley Park Hospital, Camberley, Surrey, where he worked in

practice in the UK by the General Medical Council on January 2, 1996. He gave the address of his uncle in Liverpool but it is not known where he worked until he took a job at Frimley Park Hospital on May 1, 1996. He did not perform invasive procedures and the hospital said none of the 300 patients he treated are being contacted.

Fifty patients who underwent invasive procedures which he carried out at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital are being contacted.

The British Medical Association dismissed pre-employment testing for all doctors as simplistic. "A negative HIV test could provide a false reassurance because the person tested may have been very recently infected — and it can take up to three months to show a positive result. Equally, the person tested could be exposed to an HIV risk immediately after the test."

The Public Health Laboratory Service said doctors were at much greater risk of being infected by HIV positive patients than vice versa. There have been no recorded cases of HIV transmission from healthcare workers to patients in the UK, and only two in the world.

The health department said there were no plans to introduce national guidelines requiring NHS trusts to ask specific questions about the risks of HIV.

ENDS



Rikkind adjusts his headphones as he listens to comments after his speech

Germans interested in deeds, not semantics

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE nuances of Malcolm Rifkind's words were no more than another puzzling cross-channel diversion for the German leadership. The real meat of the visit, as far as the Bonn establishment was concerned, was his attempt to address the German people over the heads of their government, and spark, if not resistance, then at least an active Euro debate.

His artful speech tried to avoid direct confrontation with Chancellor Kohl, but it was plain that Mr Rifkind was in effect urging the Germans to ditch the ideas of their leader. Each of the Chancellor's favourite metaphors was taken up and dismantled with the ardour of an ambitious barrister. There was, he said, no fundamental difference between the goals of German policy in Europe, and the establishment of a European superstate. "It was therefore misleading to suggest (as Chancellor Kohl has done) that Germany was not aiming for a United States of Europe."

There was, no point in talking about a faster integrating Europe which left behind the "slowest boats" in the convoy: "We are not talking about convays, we are talking about democracy. The European Union cannot afford to brush aside the deeply held concerns of its peoples just because they happen to be in a minority." Other Kohl metaphors were also thrown overboard. It was wrong to portray monetary union as a matter of war and peace — keeping

MPs attack MoD sale of homes to Japanese

MPs on the all-party defence select committee yesterday refused to give support to the Government's £1.66 billion sale of Service married quarters to a consortium led by the Japanese bank Nomura International. The committee, which has a Conservative majority, said in an interim report that it could endorse neither the principle of the sale by the MoD of 38,000 married quarters last year nor the choice of buyer.

£27m lottery park

A £27 million grant towards the creation of a National Discovery Park on Mersey side, was announced by the Millennium Commission. The £90 million project which, it is hoped, will create 1,600 jobs, will house national and international communication companies, studios, production training, shops and facilities for tourism.

County lifts cap

With the support of Conservative councillors, Oxfordshire has become the first local authority this year to set a budget above the Government's capping limit. Tory and Labour members on the hung council have jointly agreed to spend £6 million more than the £339.5 million Whitehall says is the maximum the county needs.

Irish protest

Dick Spring, Ireland's Foreign Minister, has protested to the British ambassador about the treatment of Roisin McAisley, the pregnant daughter of the former MP Bernadette McAisley, at Holloway Prison. She is being held as a high-risk prisoner while awaiting extradition to Germany on charges relating to an IRA attack.

Blandford held

The Marquis of Blandford was arrested yesterday for driving while disqualified, four days before he was due to get his licence back at the end of a 12-month ban. James Spencer-Churchill was stopped by Thames Valley Police while driving a blue V-registed Porsche in Kidlington, Oxfordshire, apparently on a shopping trip.

Nick Ross quits

Nick Ross is to leave his Radio 4 phone-in programme after more than ten years. He will go as soon as the general election campaign starts, when his Tuesday morning *Call Nick Ross* becomes *Election Call* under a different presenter. Radio 4 will announce the departure of Ross, 49, today.

Cromwell Street

A plan has been unveiled for a pedestrian walkway on the site of the demolished home of the mass murderer Frederick West. Gloucester City Council is seeking public comment on the walkway where 25 Cromwell Street stood. Nearby residents had opposed any new building and proposals for a memorial garden were rejected in a consultants' report.

Jopling injured

Michael Jopling, the former Agriculture Minister, was treated for suspected back injuries after an accident in a Lords v Commons go-karting event. He was taken from the Fulham track to the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital with suspected fractured ribs and minor breathing problems. His condition was said to be serious but stable.

Mesolithic canoe

Archaeologists have found the oldest canoe in Ireland in mudflats on the Shannon Estuary. The canoe, 16ft long and 2ft wide and carved from a single piece of poplar, has been carbon dated to 4800 BC, which is 2,000 years older than any other craft found in Ireland. It would have been used by Mesolithic settlers.

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EMU row isolates Clarke

Continued from page 1

the Right. But some Tory MPs took comfort from what they regarded as a significant hardening of the options-open line. They went further and criticised Mr Clarke for raising the stakes and making his disagreement with Mr Rifkind public. Iain Duncan-Smith, Tory MP for Chingford, said: "Why is a member of the Cabinet questioning a colleague in public? These things should be done privately."

In Washington, Gordon Brown, Shadow Chancellor, opened up another front, telling an audience of businessmen that re-electing the Tories, with a huge Eurosceptic contingent, "would be a recipe for continued civil war over Europe, with the national interest the loser."

Conservative Central Office was agitated at the reopening of party wounds on an issue that it was trying to bury in the run-up to the election.

The Tory manifesto posture on the single currency has already been agreed, with ministers accepting that the wait-and-see stance insisted on by Mr Clarke is preferable to any attempt to harden it,

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Investigator 'destroyed by greed'

Corrupt taxman's five years too lenient, say MPs

BY TIM JONES

MICHAEL ALLOCOCK, the taxman convicted of taking a string of bribes, was sentenced to five years in jail yesterday.

As he began his prison term, MPs condemned the leniency of the sentence, claiming that it showed that white collar crime does pay.

Alcock, 47, showed no emotion as Judge Beaumont told him at the Old Bailey that he had been destroyed by his own greed. "Your corrupt behaviour has cast a long shadow which I cannot ignore. It has called into question the careers of others and has threatened the integrity of the service itself. You are a man of marked ability and drive and with a determination to succeed."

"The sadness of your case is that the evidence makes it equally clear that had you the will to do so, you could have prospered in a career at the Inland Revenue which had begun so promisingly. You hadn't got that will. It was destroyed by greed for a style of life and the trappings of success which went with money far, far beyond that which you earned."

That greed, the judge said, had blurred his distinction of what was acceptable and what was not in the way he conducted himself in the far from hidebound regime of the Special Office.

The judge said: "The public expects and is entitled to expect its servants to be incorruptible. That they are, in part, maintained by the knowledge that when public servants are found to fall below those standards it is met with instant imprisonment."

"Your corrupt behaviour is aggravated by the length of time it continued and by the scale on which you were prepared to accept the largesse of those seeking favoured treatment."

The sentence was criticised by Toby Jessel, Conservative MP for Twickenham. "This sentence for this type of offence should be exemplary," he said. "I think the Inland Revenue themselves would want to uphold the highest standards and would expect a sentence so severe that no one else would risk that kind of corrupt behaviour. This is a disappointingly modest sentence."

Lady Olga Maitland, Tory MP for Sutton and Cheam, said: "This demonstrates that white collar crime can pay."

Eddie Loyden, Labour MP for Liverpool Garston, said: "It appears to be a paltry sentence. It is a question of the punishment fitting the crime."



Alcock faces further questioning in prison

and that does not appear to have happened in this case."

Alcock is expected to be questioned in prison by detectives who believe he may have secreted away more than £500,000 in bribes. In spite of a five-year investigation and a four-month trial, estimated to have cost £5 million, detectives have traced only £150,000.

They are convinced that with his lavish lifestyle of fast cars, holidays and sex — Alcock was provided with a prostitute — he took far more

than has been accounted for as he protected wealthy businessmen from paying their full tax liability.

Sally Alcock, 44, dismissed suggestions that her husband had money hidden in foreign bank accounts. Speaking from her home in Colchester, Essex, she said: "I am obviously devastated by what has happened. I know Michael is not a corrupt man."

"I find it unbelievable that after all the money he has recovered for the revenue they could round on him in this way. I love him and will stand by him."

Alcock had been convicted of six charges of corruption while heading a special unit known as Ghostbusters, which concentrated on chasing wealthy, mainly foreign businessmen, for undeclared tax.

He was convicted of accepting the services of a call girl, Michelle Corrigan, as a bribe from Hisham Alwan, an Iraqi-born oil consultant. Alwan, 57, from Knightsbridge, London, who was convicted of paying for Alcock's first sex session with Miss Corrigan, was given a nine-month suspended sentence and allowed to leave the court.

Alwan, who owes the Inland Revenue more than £200,000 in unpaid taxes, was ordered to pay a token £1,000 towards the prosecution costs.

Five other charges against Alcock were ordered by the judge to lie on the file. They allege he had claimed a total of £420 expenses for five hotel stays with Michelle Corrigan between 1990 and 1992. Alcock denied all of them in court and the prosecution said that as they alleged corruption on a lesser scale, they were content not to proceed.

In the wake of the scandal, the worst in the history of the Inland Revenue, several of Alcock's inspector-level colleagues face internal inquiries and sanctions that could include dismissal.



Miss Winkett outside St Paul's, where her appointment as the first woman canon led its chancellor to say he would absent himself when she celebrated communion

Woman canon not upset by criticism

BY RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Rev Lucy Winkett returned to St Paul's Cathedral from a skiing holiday yesterday and said she was not upset by the criticism her appointment as its first woman canon had attracted while she was away.

"I have been involved in the Church for most of my life so I have been well aware that the Church holds within it differing opinions on the subject of the ordination of women," Miss Winkett, 29, said. The Cambridge graduate, who is a talented soprano, said she was proud of the Church for finding a way to live with its differences.

"There is pain on both sides. What I feel very strongly is that I want to overcome the differences between someone like me, who feels as a woman called to the priesthood — I believe myself to be a priest — and someone who finds that very difficult."

One member of the chapter, Canon John Halliberton, the chancellor of St Paul's, has said he will absent himself from the cathedral — a bastion of Anglo-Catholicism — whenever she celebrates communion. Yesterday, he joined Miss Winkett and the Dean, the Very Rev John Moses, at St Paul's chapter house and repeated that, although he was "looking forward very much" to working with her, he would not be present at such times.

"A certain authority has to be shown in the Church before you take a step like the ordination of women to the priesthood," he said.

Miss Winkett said her vocation had come upon her in a single moment, when she was about 23. "I was sitting in a church service one evening and it just kind of happened. Something clicked inside me and I wanted to be a priest."

Miss Winkett went to theological college after her boyfriend, Andrew Stillwell, died after he fell while walking in the French Alps. She said there was no direct link with her calling. "I would not say that there is any kind of logical progression from one to the other. That is too easy and death is not like that."



Dowding planned defence of Britain

Hope of promotion for hero Dowding

BY MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

LORD DOWDING, who masterminded the Battle of Britain as Commander-in-Chief Fighter Command in 1940, may be given a unique posthumous promotion.

The RAF hero was never appointed to the five star rank of the Royal Air Force rank, despite his huge achievements in saving Britain from Hitler's bombers. Although Winston Churchill made him a baron in gratitude for his wartime command, Lord Dowding remained a four star air chief marshal.

After a long campaign by surviving Battle of Britain pilots, the Ministry of Defence has now finally agreed to look into his possible posthumous elevation to marshal of the Royal Air Force. A spokesman for the RAF confirmed that the matter was being studied, although he emphasised that it would be "most unusual" to have a posthumous promotion.

He added: "Lord Dowding received a number of honours for his achievements in the Second World War and he is one of the few RAF commanders to have a statue erected in London." David Whiting, Lord Dowding's stepson, said yesterday: "I'm delighted. Had he been marshal of the RAF his final years would have been far easier for him as he would have continued with a very good war pension."

Peter Vincent, one of the leading campaigners for Lord Dowding's posthumous promotion, said: "They must be able to bend the rules."

Three months for PC in death race

BY JOANNA BALE

A POLICE patrolman was jailed for three months yesterday over the deaths of his colleague and an innocent motorist in a crash during a 100mph chase.

PC Leslie Collins, 43, of West Midlands Police, was found guilty of two charges of causing death by dangerous driving. The jury took nearly four hours to reach unanimous decisions at Birmingham Crown Court.

PC Collins was at the wheel of a marked patrol car which responded to an alarm call in Oldbury in the early hours of December 17, 1995. On arrival, he saw a stolen red Ford Escort drive away. PC Collins and his passenger, PC Robert Dallow, 41, gave chase.

The Escort, driven by a 16-year-old youth, drove around local streets before going on to the A4123 Wolverhampton Road dual carriageway. Michael Joyce, for the prosecution, said: "In the course of the pursuit, the defendant went through a red traffic light and collided with a vehicle driven by Neil Homer, which was passing with the lights in his favour."

Mr Homer, 20, of Oldbury,

West Midlands, was at the wheel of a white Vauxhall Nova, had slowly pulled out of the junction. The police car slammed into his driver's door at a speed estimated at 93mph. The police car swerved off into iron railings.

Investigations showed that the young man's car was travelling at about 20mph when he was killed. PC Dallow also died, but PC Collins walked away virtually unscathed. He was later suspended from duty.

Some witnesses said they had not seen brake lights on the police car as he approached the junction, and it appeared he had engaged the brakes only after he had seen the Nova, when it was too late to avoid the collision. The officer maintained that he had his blue lights flashing and two-tone horn sounding to alert other motorists.

PC Collins, a qualified advanced driver, maintained that he had believed the pursuit was safe. The 16-year-old driving the stolen car was later sentenced to 12 months in custody for motoring offences, including aggravated vehicle taking.

Drug user cleared of Rolex robbery

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

A SELF-CONFESSED drug user was cleared of robbing a company director of his £16,000 Rolex watch at knife-point yesterday after saying that cocaine dealers kidnapped his young son and forced him to it.

A jury found Alec Alowade, 21, had acted under duress in the attack on Vincent and Elizabeth Monsey while their Range Rover was stuck in traffic in west London last August.

Mr Monsey, 53, told Southwark Crown Court how two hooded men broke the driver's window, ripped off his watch at knife-point and fled after failing to take his wife's matching £12,000 Rolex.

Alowade, from Paddington, west London, was caught moments later by plainclothes police and a group of South African tourists who gave chase and found the stolen watch in his pocket.

He admitted taking part in the attack but denied charges of robbery and attempted robbery, saying he had acted under duress because he owed an £800 cocaine debt to a Yardie gang who had abducted his son and increased the

sum to £2,500. A second defendant, Tarek Alayli, 21, of Fulham, west London, admitted both charges. He will be sentenced later.

Sally Howes, for the prosecution, said Mr Monsey, who was recovering from a heart attack eight months earlier, and his American-born wife Elizabeth, 36, a cable television programming director, were driving home to Barnes, southwest London, when he saw two hooded men one black and one Mediterranean, approach the car. The pair smashed the driver's window to get in.

Mr Monsey said: "The black man came right into the car and started lighting with us. The top half of his body was completely in the vehicle. The whole time they kept saying, 'Give us the Rolex or we'll stab you'. The black man leant across me and started attacking my wife. She screamed: 'He's got a knife'."

Mr Monsey said they had appealed for help to a taxi driver, who just shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

Mrs Monsey, who used a pen to fight off the attackers, was cut on her palm.

Britain may yodel to reach peak of the Eurovision song mountain

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

SCOTSMEN have taken a singing tip from the Swiss to create Britain's hottest contender to end 16 years of failure in the Eurovision Song Contest. Their entry is a full-throated mountain yodel.

The writers of *Yodel in the Canyon of Love* admitted last night that the song was a spoof based on a pile of sillier entries from Eurovision history, but insisted that it was also a serious love song. Kenny MacDonald, who collaborated with Gordon MacDonald, who is no relation, said: "I take my inspiration from the more fun side of Eurovision. But it is also a positive love song and will be performed like that."

The song is on the shortlist of four for the Great British Song Contest, which will select the UK Eurovision entry next month. It will be sung by Kerry

McGregor, 22, who is paralysed from the knees down after falling out of a tree as a teenager. The record features a dance beat underneath the kind of rambles designed to communicate with a neighbour on the far side of an Alpine valley. Such over-the-top lyrics as "I yodel in the canyon of love/I call your name/Again and again".

Jonathan King, the organiser of the Great British Song Contest, said he loved the record but was uncertain how it would fare when other European countries judged its quality. "It's absolutely a spoof and I think it's terribly funny. But it is also infectious and catchy and sounds like a hit. However, I dread the idea of it being our entry because it will either storm it or get nul points, though I would hope for douze points from the Swiss and Austrians."


Britain last won the Eurovision Song

Contest in 1981 with Bucks Fizz and *Making Your Mind Up*, a fairly straightforward ditty, but the annals of the contest are littered with preposterous winners. Our very own Lulu triumphed with *Boom Bang-A-Bang*, and other victorious entries have included *Ding Dong* from the Dutch, *Diggi-Loo, Diggi-Lay* from the Swedes, *A-Ba-Ni-Bi* from Israel and *La La La* from Spain.

"Unfortunately the silly songs are now in the dim and distant past," said King. "Recently they have been neither silly nor good. Let's hope this year we can break the mould."


When the laughter at the Swiss embassy had subsided, a spokeswoman said: "We don't have a monopoly on yodelling. There are the Austrians and Germans of course, and the Japanese have become very taken with it. We welcome all yodellers."

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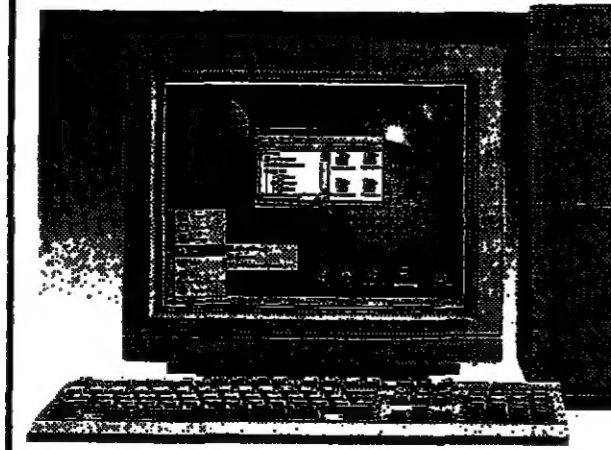


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Figures threaten viability of register

Home Office says more than 100,000 paedophiles at large

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

AT LEAST 110,000 convicted paedophiles live in England and Wales, and most of them are at large, according to a detailed Home Office study. They are among 260,000 men who have been convicted of sexual offences.

The scale of the problem casts doubt on the Government's strategy of tackling public concern by requiring sex criminals to register their addresses with the police. It also highlights the scale of the problem faced by schools, playgroups, churches and others hoping to keep paedophiles away from children.

A total of about 4,200 sex offenders are in prison, at least half of them for offences committed against children. The proposed register will not be retrospective, so it would be decades before a comprehensive list of men who pose a potential danger to children and women is complete.

The figures are contained in a draft report placed in the House of Commons library by the Home Office Minister David Maclean, in response to a question tabled by Peter Thurnham, a Liberal Democrat spokesman on social services. The document has been prepared by Peter Marshall of the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate, using a computerised database of all convictions.

It is a difficult exercise to work out how many of the population have committed offences. Some are convicted of several at once and others

reoffend over years. It is the first time the real proportion of paedophiles has been calculated. This week the authors of an Australian paedophile register containing hundreds of names, and some photographs, promised to publish a similar book for public sale in Britain.

The Home Office figures include an age breakdown. There are 4,000 men aged 20 to 25 with paedophile convictions; 6,000 aged 26 to 29; 21,000 in their 30s and 79,000 over 40. Male child molesters are six times as likely to commit an offence against a girl as a boy. Because illegal sex is so widespread, the register is likely to become unwieldy over the years.

The Sex Offenders Bill excludes people involved in minor offences, such as prostitutes and their clients, men who commit indecent exposure and people possessing hard pornography depicting adults.

It also makes some exclusions on grounds of age: the obligation to register would not include teenagers who had sex with under-age partners, and homosexuals who behaved indecently with other men aged over 18.

That still leaves 125,000 men who would have been required to notify police of their addresses if the law had been in force since the 1950s. That is the number of males who have committed such crimes as rape, incest, indecent assault, and sex with minors.

The register would be even longer because people who are cautioned instead of going to court would be included on the list for five years. There are 2,200 cautions a year given to men for sexual offences.

The reconviction rate for sex criminals is lower than for other types of crime, but experts believe that many more continue to offend without getting caught. Within five years of conviction for a sexual offence, 10 per cent of offenders had been convicted of another sex charge and a further 12 per cent of violence. The 110,000 figure for the number of convicted paedophiles is likely to be far below the real rate of child molesting, because so few

cases reach the courts and many suspects are cleared. Mr Thurnham said: "They reckon that only 5 per cent go before a court and a smaller percentage are found guilty. This is because of the difficulty of children as witnesses, and abuse within the family where there is a conspiracy to keep it from court. It will be decades before the register is anywhere near complete although it is a step in the right direction."

Mr Thurnham said paedophiles should remain in custody until they were assessed as being safe for release. He doubted, in election year, whether the Government would promise adequate treatment to cure molesters: "People are not voting politicians in on the amount of money they spend on treatment for paedophiles."



A 2lb tent peg identical to the one used by the murderer as his victim painted a patio door

Schoolgirl died in frenzy of blows from 18in spike

By EMMA WILKINS

DETECTIVES seeking the killer of the schoolgirl Billie-Jo Jenkins yesterday displayed a metal spike identical to the 18 in tent peg used to bludgeon her. The weapon is still being examined by forensic scientists.

Detective Superintendent Jeremy Paine, who is leading the investigation, said that the 13-year-old girl was hit more than once with the spike, which weighs about 2lb. "It was a frenzied attack," he said. Sussex police have asked criminal psychologists at the National Crime Faculty at Bournemouth, Hampshire, to prepare a profile of the murderer. "I am confident that they will be able to give us some help," Mr Paine said.

His team has issued a computerised image of a man seen leaving the Jenkins's house at Hastings on Boxing Day or the day after. The man, 6ft tall, in his early twenties and wearing black gloves and a black woolly hat, does not match the description of a prowler seen near the house in the weeks before the killing.

Pupils at Helenswood Comprehensive School for Girls, Hastings, which Billie-Jo at-



A computer image of a 6ft man seen at Christmas leaving the Hastings home of Billie-Jo Jenkins

tended, held a memorial service yesterday. Many of the 167 girls in her year wept as they stood in silent tribute to the girl they had elected as their representative on the school council. A memorial service for the whole school will be held later. Pupils will be asked to submit ideas for a permanent memorial to Billie-Jo in the school grounds.

The Rev Roger Gray, minister of the Baptist church which the family attended, said that he had spoken to Sion and Lois Jenkins, Billie-Jo's legal

guardians. "I feel they would want to look for forgiveness. We teach that — we don't take revenge," he said.

The family have worshipped at Halton Baptist Church since moving to Hastings in 1993. Billie-Jo, who was killed as she painted patio doors last Saturday afternoon, was considering baptism by immersion. Mr Gray said: "She was a lovely girl. She liked looking after young people. She was full of energy and was beginning to think about being baptised."



Thurnham called for spending on treatment

Jailed molester loses right to council house

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A COUNCIL won the right yesterday to refuse to rehouse a convicted paedophile with a long history of assaults on children who lost his council home when serving a jail sentence.

In a landmark case, the High Court ruled that the circumstances provided "ample justification" for the London Borough of Hounslow's refusal to provide a roof for R, a 65-year-old man who cannot be named.

The man had accused the housing authority of acting illegally when it decided he was not entitled to help because he had made himself "intentionally homeless" by being jailed for sexual assaults on boys and losing his original council accommodation.

Stephen Richards, sitting as a deputy High Court judge, rejected the man's application for judicial review. The judge agreed with the council that "a fair-minded bystander", knowing of R's long history of sexual offences against children and long periods in prison, would "unhesitatingly conclude" that loss of accommodation was the likely result of committing further offences.

Yesterday's ruling clarifies the law for housing authorities all over the country grappling with their duty to offer accommodation to homeless people.

But lawyers acting on behalf of paedophiles fear that it could add to the dangers of a "lynch law" mentality devel-

oping as the debate continues on whether the public should have access to a paedophile register so that they can identify child molesters living near their homes.

The ruling, which could also have implications for former prisoners generally, came under immediate fire from penal reform groups. Paul Cavadino, chair of the Penal Affairs Consortium, which represents 29 criminal justice bodies, said that the ruling could put the public more at risk as prisoners released without accommodation were more than twice as likely to re-offend.

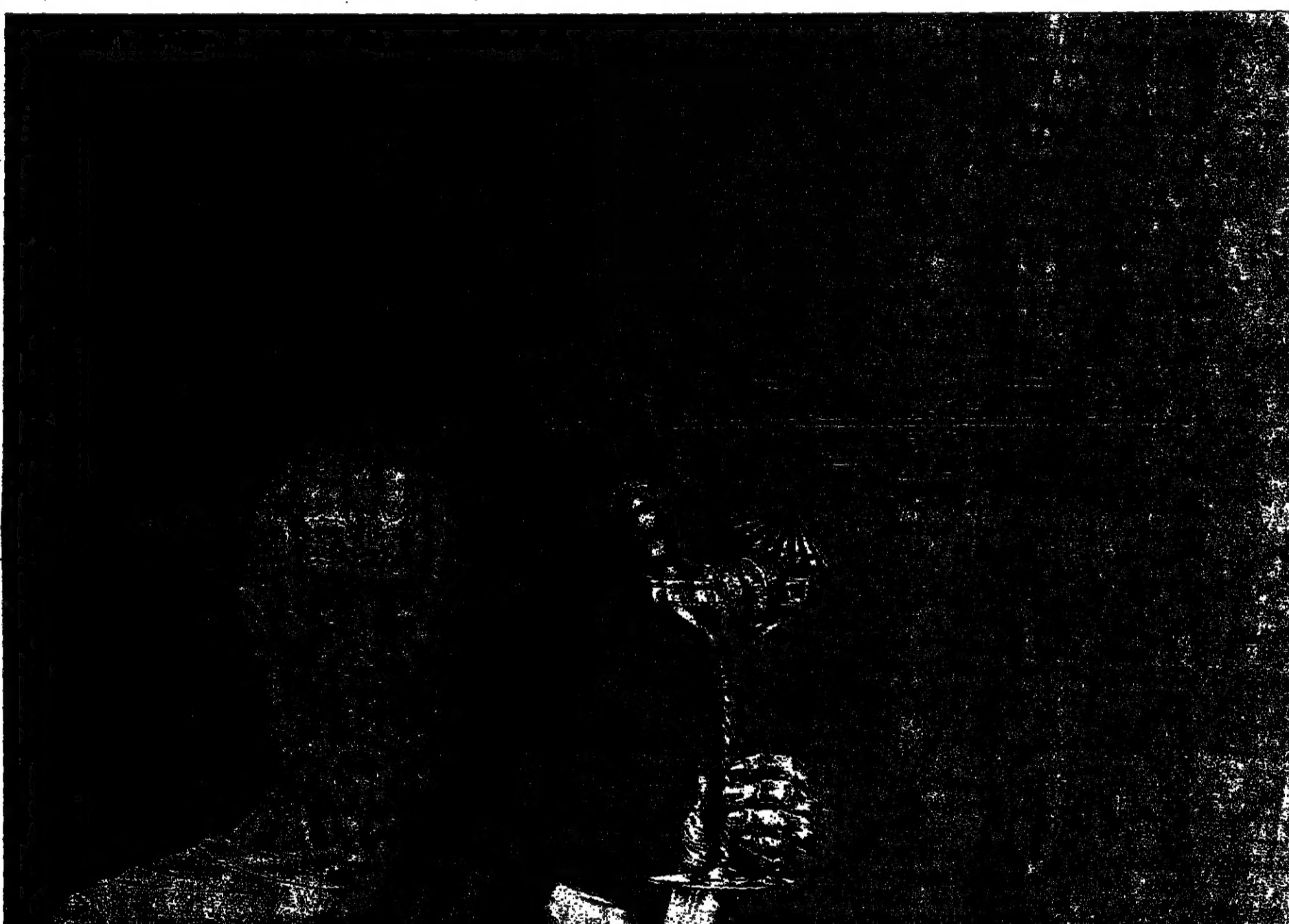
"It appears to deprive any ex-prisoner who reoffends of the right to housing on the ground that he has become intentionally homeless, which is extremely disturbing," he said. "Giving housing authorities a blanket discretion to refuse housing to ex-prisoners will increase — not decrease — the risk to the public."

He said that it was important to remember that paedophiles refused accommodation did not disappear: "They move elsewhere, typically to anonymous bedsits, but still in towns and cities full of children." The measures which could do most to prevent reoffending included extending intensive supervision and treatment programmes, he said. "But it is much more difficult to treat people not in settled accommodation."

Jan Luba, counsel for R, had argued that it was unreasonable for the council to have expected him to keep up the tenancy when he could not afford the rent. If the council were right, it would mean that any council tenant jailed for a period which meant they could not keep up rent payments would face homelessness because of inability to pay.

CORRECTION

Occupiers of second homes have needed a TV licence since last March, but some people living in caravans no longer need one (report, February 12). The effect on BBC revenue is likely to be negligible.



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Patients support Dr John who wants to be Joanna

By CAROL MIDGLEY

A GP has sent letters to 15,000 patients telling them he is to have a sex-change operation and wishes to be called Joanna when he returns to work.

John Browne, a divorced father of four, has the full backing of the St Bartholomew's Medical Centre, Oxford, where he has worked for 15 years, and of the British Medical Association.

In the letters, which patients received yesterday, Dr Browne, 46, who has been undergoing hormone treatment, explains that he is a transsexual who has suffered a "prolonged battle" with his feelings for many years.

"There is a condition which goes to the very root of a person's identity," he writes. "This condition is present from birth and means that an individual's 'brain sex' (how they think) is opposite to the physical sex suggested by their body. It can only be resolved by a transformation to the physical appearance of a female. For the next few weeks I shall be taking leave of absence from St Bartholomew's Medical Centre and returning



Dr John Browne will return as Joanna

afterwards as Dr Joanna Browne."

Staff at the fundholding practice in the Cowley area of Oxford said that, so far, patients had been largely supportive of the GP. Only one, a man, had asked to change to another doctor. Other patients are being offered information leaflets on transsexuality or discussions with management at the centre.

Some patients said they had noticed Dr Browne's appear-

ance start to change a year ago. Dr Seymour J.G. Spencer, 76, a retired psychiatrist, said he and his wife Margaret, who had been patients for 15 years, regarded it as a private matter that would make no difference to them.

"We did notice that he had started to wear make up and had dyed his hair and grown it long so it was clear there was a problem," Dr Spencer said. "But it will make no difference to him professionally. He will be the same person and have the same brain. He is an excellent doctor, very erudite and very compassionate."

The senior partner at the practice, Dr Roger Burne, said: "He has been a good colleague and friend for a great number of years and I shall continue to support him. He has become aware of a deep conviction that he should have been born female. This conclusion has meant facing some very difficult personal and professional issues."

"There is no evidence to show anyone leaving the practice because of this. Those who know about it have been nothing but supportive."

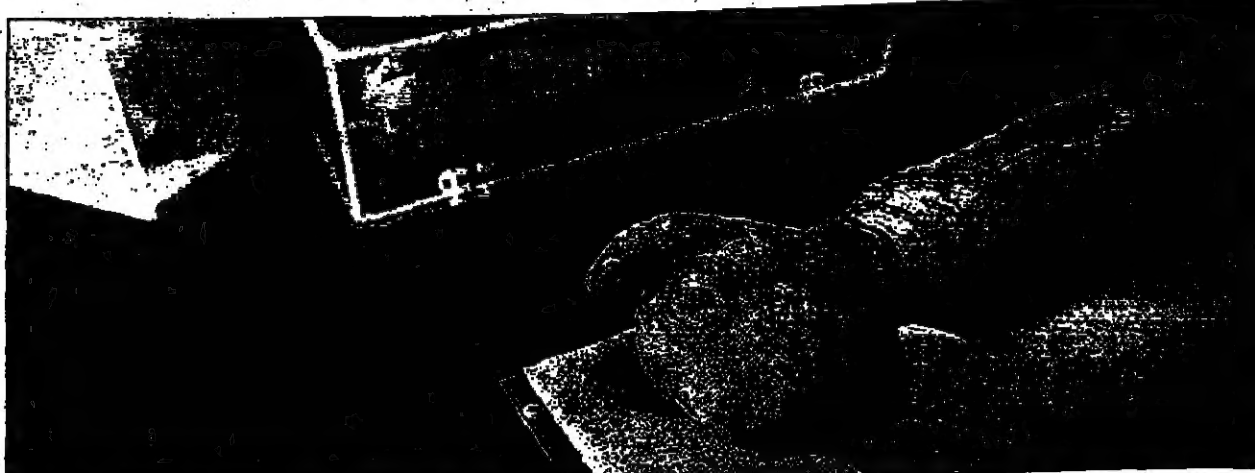
A spokesman for the BMA,

which yesterday installed a public relations adviser in the clinic, said: "Gender reassignment remains a rarely performed procedure. Because of its rarity, it attracts a great deal of attention and speculation which can be both stressful and intrusive for the people involved."

"The BMA would want to see the individual's decision to proceed with gender assignment respected and their privacy safeguarded. The BMA believes every doctor should have the right to be open about their sexuality and gender identity at work without fear of discrimination."

One patient, Tony Moore, 47, said: "It will make no difference to me. He is an excellent doctor. I just hope he finds personal happiness."

A 28-year-old woman patient added: "I noticed Dr Browne was becoming more effeminate. I thought he must be gay. But now I know he is having a sex change, it all makes sense. I think it's a very brave thing for him to do. He always looks very happy and always seems to be dashing about the surgery in good spirits."

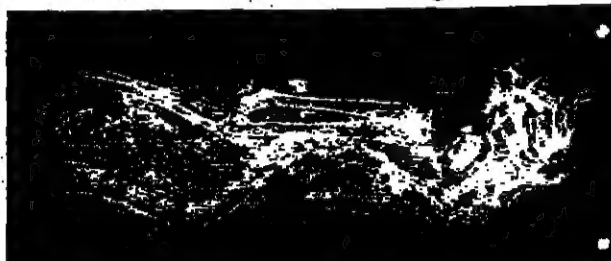


The mummified animals were X-rayed for the Museum of Reading by radiologists at the Royal Berkshire Hospital

X-rays let cat out of the bag after 2,500 years

THEY looked like something the cat brought in, but three mystery objects sent to a hospital's radiology department for identification were rather more historic. The mummified remains were actually cats from ancient Egypt, all preserved to share the afterlife with their owners 2,500 years ago.

Curators at the Museum of Reading approached the Royal Berkshire Hospital after deciding to restore the fragile artefacts, which had been at the museum since the 1930s. It took the radiologist, Jim Chorley five minutes to identify them all. He said: "I've never X-rayed a mummy before. They are certainly less



Exposed: the cat that was alive in about 500 BC

trouble than humans. They keep still."

Celia Lincoln, a museum spokeswoman, said: "We decided that we would have them X-rayed to make certain what they were. We were pretty sure that two were cats

but we were not at all sure what the third was. They have suffered a lot of wear and tear over the centuries and they are taken out to schools and shown to children."

Philip Wickees, secretary

of the Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society, said that mummification of cats was extremely common: "Cats were sacred and their owners often took them with them after they died. There's a graveyard in Saqqara, near Cairo, that has tens of thousands of them. Unfortunately, the Victorians didn't have the same regard for them when they started bringing back items from Egypt. They used these mummified cats as ballast on the ships and even as fuel for boilers and furnaces. When they got back to England, the mummies often ended up as material for paper or fertiliser."

"The best thing about a building society account is you can always take your money out and put it in a PEP."

Branson's trains will take years to get up to speed

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

RICHARD BRANSON said yesterday that it would be up to five years before passengers noticed major improvements in the West Coast main line rail service after Virgin won a 15-year franchise to run the London to Glasgow route.

Mr Branson, who has pledged to spend £600 million on a fleet of 140mph tilting trains to cut journey times, admitted that it would take time to turn around the underfunded line. "Our pledge is to turn this into the best railway in Europe, but it will not be achieved overnight. We are going to be putting seat-back videos in, better food, better drink and better service."

Celia, of rail privatisation, said the disruption caused by the sell-off had delayed the £2 billion upgrading of the 400-mile line by a decade. British Rail was granted funding in the 1993 Budget but the work was cancelled because of privatisation. It will now be carried out by Railtrack. The line, which was last upgraded between 1968 and 1972, has since become infamous for unreliability and delays.

About a fifth of its services are more than ten minutes late, a record that Mr Branson hopes to improve within a year. Journey times are slower than they were in the early 1970s because of speed restrictions on the route.

The new tilting trains should start running in 2002 but they will not be able to operate at full speed until 2004, when Railtrack's upgrading of the line is complete. Journey times between London and Glasgow will then be reduced to around 3hr 50min, compared with the current 5½hr. London to

Manchester will eventually be reduced to 1hr 45min compared with 2½hr now.

Virgin won the franchise, its second, with a highly aggressive bid that will save the Government at least £1.5 billion of subsidy. It will pay the Government more than £900 million in "rail tax" for operating rights over the life of the franchise.

To make the franchise profitable Virgin plans to increase average loadings from 55 per cent to at least 65 per cent, and increase revenue by 30 per cent by 2000. Mr Branson said the improvements would render the lucrative London to Manchester air route obsolete and would clear millions of cars from the M6. The rail route currently has about 6 per cent of passenger traffic between London and Glasgow, the airlines 4 per cent and the roads 94 per cent.

ScotRail is the only unsold former BR network.

Magnus Linklater, page 20



Branson said he would spend £600m on trains

Railtrack 'has left stations to rot'

By JONATHAN PRYNN

DOZENS of crumbling train stations and hundreds of miles of track have been "left to rot" by Railtrack since its privatisation last year, a rail pressure group said yesterday.

The company, which today unveils details of its ten-year investment programme, was accused of putting profits before passengers and under-spending on essential maintenance by £750 million. Jonathan Bray, spokesman for Save Our Railways, said the investment failure had condemned passengers to "disgusting, dangerous stations as well as slow and unreliable journeys".

He added: "All regular rail users know that you don't have to travel far to find run-

down stations, speed restrictions and weeds and litter all over the place. Railtrack have spent their first three years putting their friends in the City before the interests of passengers."

In a dossier of the network's worst and most neglected stations and routes, Save Our Railways identified Britain's top ten rail blackspots as: South Greenford, west London; Wolverton near Milton Keynes; Northamptonshire; Bournemouth; Sheringham, Norfolk; Bridgwater, Somerset; Bugle, Cornwall; St Erth, Cornwall; Per station, Cornwall; Barnes Bridge, west London; and Walthamstow Queen's Road, northeast London.

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Libraries urged to work day and night for high-tech future

By IAN MURRAY, COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

LIBRARIES should open during evenings and Sundays, according to the first government report on the service for more than 30 years. It concludes that they are part of the entertainment world and must compete by providing high-tech reference sections and low-brow books outside usual working hours.

Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, believes that libraries are the key element in bringing new technology to the people. Sixty per cent of British adults use a library at least once a year, but the report expects they will become more popular if recommendations are followed.

Opening when most people are not at work was an essential part of the strategy, with a librarian no longer likely to be working from 9am to 5pm. No extra money was being made available for this, but staff could be asked to work late shifts if fewer were on duty during the normal day, while volunteers could be recruited for unsocial hours.

Public libraries cost £639 million in 1995, of which £109 was spent on books and other materials. The abandonment of the price-fixing Net Book Agreement is expected to make it possible for them to

buy books more cheaply. The review found that the original concept of the British public library had altered, from high seriousness towards entertainment. Popular books had to be stocked, but this was a useful way of luring people into the habit of reading. Stressing that free book-lending remained the key element, the review said that this should serve as a base for introducing new technology.

Funding for equipment will come initially from a "challenge" fund; the Wolfson Foundation has provided £3 million to add to £6 million set aside for refurbishment over the next three years. After the millennium celebrations, money from the lottery will be available. The Heritage Fund is to provide cash for libraries with outstanding collections of special books or archive material, or those in important historical buildings.

Ian Sprouat, the Heritage Minister, said: "Technology is changing so fast that plans for introducing new systems need to be flexible enough to take account of both the changes and their cost and the need for libraries to play the fullest appropriate role." He has asked a working group set up under the Library and Inform-

mation Commission to report by July on how libraries in England should respond to the challenge of new technology.

Starting next April, libraries will be required to publish annual performance targets, and submit plans to the Heritage Department for evaluation. They will be encouraged to form more partnerships with the private sector, contracting out services and seeking trust status. However, the Government has backed away from compulsory competitive tendering.

The Library Association said it was heartened to see the Government embracing the vision of libraries as the hub of information and imagination in the next century. However, Royston Fitter, of the pressure group Library Campaign, said: "The report is facile. We are told we should open for longer hours, but the reason they are closed is that libraries don't have the funds to stay open."

□ *Reading the Future: A Review of Public Libraries in England* is available free from: Libraries Division, Department of National Heritage, 24 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH



The Prince, accompanied by his private detective, aboard the traditional dragon boat crewed by Bengali women in Shadwell basin yesterday

Prince waives lifejacket rules on Docklands boat trip

By ALAN HAMILTON

UNDETERRED by seasonal squalls, the Prince of Wales took a short boat trip to Bengal on a visit to Docklands yesterday. The Prince, who declined to don a lifejacket, sat in a traditional dragon boat crewed by Bengali women, as an introduction to his official trip to Bangladesh next week.

He took the precaution, before boarding amid gusts of wind approaching 40mph, of painting in the

eyes of the colourful figurehead on the prow. The tradition, of Chinese origin, is said to guarantee good fortune and a safe passage.

The Prince was visiting the Shadwell Basin Project, a Prince's Trust project which offers the chance of water sports in the once-thriving commercial dock to disadvantaged local young people.

His two-day visit to Bangladesh is a prelude to the Queen's visit to the Indian sub-continent in the autumn

to mark the 50th anniversary of independence for India and Pakistan; Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, is the one area of former British India that the monarch will not be visiting.

The Prince will spend much of his time in the Sylhet region, homeland of the majority of the Bengali community which now forms the dominant ethnic group in the east London borough of Tower Hamlets. The borough is said to be home to at least

24 mother tongues besides English, of which Sylheti is among the most common.

Bengalis are among the main beneficiaries of the Shadwell Basin Project, which is funded by the Prince's Trust and by the St Katharine and Shadwell Trust, a community grant-making charity set up in 1994 with a £3.5 million donation from the local authority and News International, owners of The Times and a major local employer.

Gene spray could ease asthma pain

By NICK NUTTALL

SCIENTISTS believe they have found a new treatment for asthma sufferers. The technique stops airborne particles from causing severe tightening of the lungs, which leads to acute breathing difficulties.

The American researchers, who tested their treatment on rabbits, blocked some of the most damaging effects of such particles as pollen, house dust mite faeces and air pollution.

The technique hinges on an emerging form of genetic therapy called anti-sense DNA therapy. Genetically engineered material, given to the rabbits as an inhalation spray, interferes with the production of a protein called adenosine, which causes muscles in the lungs to contract.

Studies indicate that the lungs of asthmatics have far higher numbers of adenosine receptors than normal people. The new technique switches off the genes that make the receptors. Without receptors, the protein cannot tell the

nervous system to squeeze tight the lungs. The therapy, which is published in *Nature*, has been developed at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina.

Professor Peter Barnes, of the National Heart and Lung Institute at the Royal Brompton Hospital, London, and an adviser to the National Asthma Campaign, said the therapy was so promising that it should proceed to clinical trials. If it proved safe, it would need to be used daily. The technique could also be developed to block other steps in an asthma attack.

Professor Barnes said that there were three million asthma sufferers in Britain: "Ten per cent of children and between 5 and 10 per cent of adults in Britain are reckoned to be asthmatic."

There are 2,000 deaths a year, which makes it one of the commonest causes of death in young people. Asthma accounts for 14 per cent of prescription costs.

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A walk on the wild side for Martin the hungry tiger

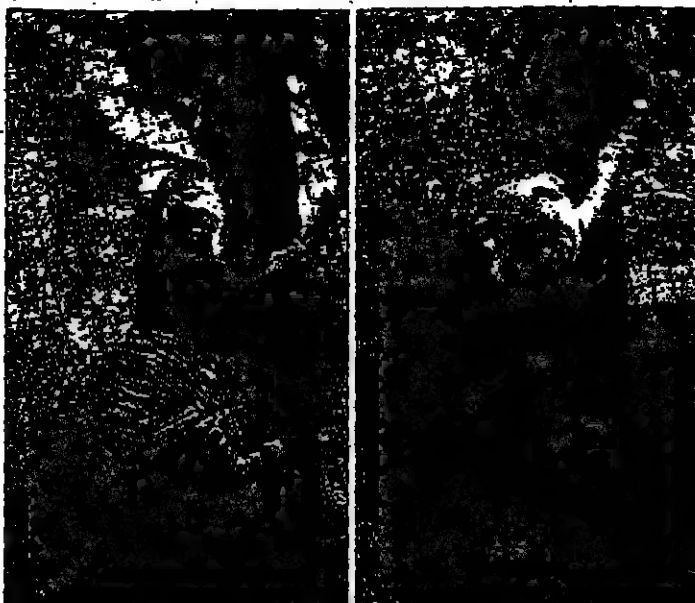
By KATHRYN KNIGHT

HE looks fierce, but the wild side of life has been rather absent for a tiger named Martin. Now keepers at London Zoo are trying to bring out the beast in him. For a start, they keep hiding his food.

Instead of being handed over on a plate, meat is hidden under rocks or at the top of a pole as part of a new lifestyle to redevelop predatory skills in the big cat's enclosure. Martin, a Sumatran tiger, and his mate Mira must now jump, climb or forage to eat. The technique is one of many which may be used to help the conservation of tigers.

As scientists from around the world gather at the zoo today for Tiger 2000 — the first major tiger conservation forum for a decade — it is hoped that the techniques may eventually form part of a larger programme designed to reintroduce domesticated tigers back to the wild. Other tricks adopted by the tigers' keeper, Caroline Connor, include dragging meat on a piece of rope to leave a scent trail and strewing the enclosure with the faeces of other animals to introduce the cats to new scents.

"There's not always a reward at the end of it, but that's the point," Ms Connor said. "Sometimes they get the meat and sometimes they



How to drive a tiger a little wild: Martin climbs for food

don't. This way they get to exercise their body and their brain. Their muscle tone improves and they become alert to new possibilities. We can't give them live prey so this is the next best thing."

Future plans include stringing a wire over a log in the water, so the tigers have to balance and jump for

their meat. "They're bound to fall in a few times, which is okay as they like water, but we thought we'd wait until it got a bit warmer."

Douglas Richardson, assistant curator of mammals at the zoo, said: "Reintroduction may be one way of helping conservation. Tigers who have bred in captivity

could be slowly reintroduced to the wild with their cubs.

"We could have a situation where we have a zoo-type enclosure in the wild which is slowly eroded, leaving the tigers free. For the time being, we want the tigers to demonstrate as wide a range of their natural behaviour as possible, to mirror what they would do in their natural environment."

At Tiger 2000, scientists and conservationists will spend two days discussing practical ways to help the dwindling tiger population and highlight the problems to governments worldwide. Topics range from genetics to anti-poaching operations.

Richard Borge, director-general of London Zoo, said that the tiger population had declined dramatically over the past decade and some of the smaller sub-species would not survive. Poaching — for skins and ingredients for oriental medicines — and environmental development were the greatest threats. "In 1990 alone, 1,900 kilos of tiger bone were imported from Taiwan into Japan — that's 400 to 500 tigers," he said. "Tigers are also increasingly coming into conflict with the human population as their natural habitat is destroyed. There are areas we are not going to be able to save."



The tiger who doesn't know where his next meal will come from

Accident verdict for soldiers hit by shell

By MICHAEL EVANS

TWO soldiers killed by a stray artillery shell at a firing range in Canada died accidentally, a coroner ruled yesterday.

Corporals Robert Hawksley and Martin Bailey of The Queen's Royal Lancers were hit by a 95 lb shell that landed in their trench during an exercise at the British Army Training Grounds at Suffield in Alberta in 1994.

Peter Ashworth, the coroner at their inquest at Derby, said he could record a verdict of unlawful killing only if he was satisfied that those involved had been grossly negligent. "This tragedy was caused by the convergence by chance of many factors... Though I record this verdict that does not mean there have not been faults."

After the inquest, David Hawksley, 57, father of Corporal Hawksley, from Toton in Nottinghamshire, said: "We thought the inquest may have given us justice but it hasn't." The Army had been playing Russian roulette with his son's life, he added.

IRA hit again as republic police seize detonators

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

POLICE in the Irish Republic have uncovered an IRA bomb-making factory where the terrorists assembled detonating cords.

Armed officers seized more than 100 lengths of plastic tubing stuffed with Semtex explosives that could have been used to detonate massive bombs of the type that devastated the City of London in the early 1990s.

The coup was the latest in a series of successful anti-terrorist operations. Since the collapse of the IRA ceasefire in February last year, police on both sides of the Irish border and in mainland Britain have uncovered bomb-making factories, arms caches and terrorist hideouts. However, the IRA is still believed to have several tonnes of Semtex.

The successes indicate that the Garda Special Branch, the RUC and MI5 managed to penetrate the IRA at senior levels during the 18-month ceasefire. One security source in London said: "Every time the terrorists pop up, we're there waiting for them."

Observers in Northern Ireland also believe that the public on both sides of the

border were so horrified by the resumption of IRA terrorism that people who would never have thought of contacting the police were now tipping them off. The IRA admitted that Roman Catholics were undermining it when the Belfast Brigade warned last month that informers would be shot.

In the latest police operation, on Monday, detonating cords were seized as they were being moved from one vehicle to another near Moyvalley, Co Kildare, on the main Dublin to Galway road. A short time later, armed officers seized similar cords in a series of raids in Portlaoise, Co Waterford. Buildings were also raided in Tipperary and Kilkenny. Five people, including a woman, were arrested during the raids.

The seizures will prompt a major internal IRA investigation by the "civil administration team", which reports to the organisation's "adjutant-general". The terrorists will want to know whether an informer within the IRA tipped off police or their plans were thwarted by sophisticated Garda intelligence.



One of the posters in Christchurch yesterday

Tufnell row helps 'best joint in town'

By PATRICK SMELLIE IN WELLINGTON

THE England cricketer Philip Tufnell, who was accused of smoking cannabis by waitresses at a restaurant in Christchurch on the eve of England's victory in the Third Test against New Zealand, may have been the victim of a publicity stunt, it emerged yesterday.

Bardellis, the restaurant at the centre of the allegations, fell under suspicion when posters saying "Phil Tufnell must agree that Bardellis really is Christchurch's Best Joint" were spotted in the city centre.

A Wellington bar, Cafe Brava, gained similar public-

ity late last year when its staff spoke to the media about several late-night incidents involving the Deputy Prime Minister-to-be, Winston Peters.

Staff at Bardellis would not comment on the incident. In a separate development, Christchurch media sources said that Caitlin Cherry, the waitress who made the story public, is studying broadcast journalism at a local college. Ms Cherry is thought to have tipped off local media before informing Bardellis management.

Tufnell has dismissed the allegations as ridiculous.

Cricket, page 44

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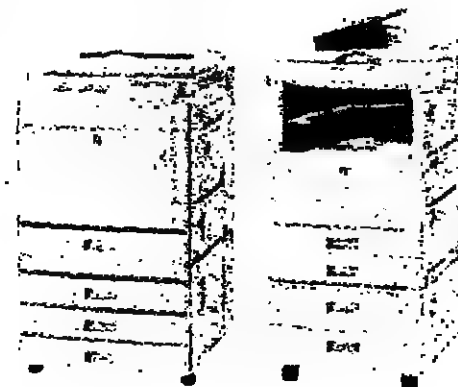
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Appeal Court cuts award to assault victim by £185,000

Exemplary damages against the police limited to £50,000

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

JURIES are to be limited to £50,000 when awarding exemplary damages to victims of unlawful arrest and police assault.

Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, set the new guidelines yesterday in a test case brought by the Metropolitan Police, who complained that juries were making excessive exemplary awards of more than £100,000 against the force. Awards for civil actions have cost it £20 million since 1986.

In a landmark judgment, the Appeal Court cut by £185,000 a £220,000 award to Kenneth Hsu, a hairdresser who was wrongfully arrested, assaulted and imprisoned by police in south London. The court upheld a jury's award of £20,000 compensation to Mr Hsu, 34, from Tulse Hill, south London, but reduced exemplary damages from £200,000 to £15,000.

In a written judgment, Lord Woolf said: "This should suffice to demonstrate the strongest disapproval of what occurred and make it clear to the Commissioner and his force that conduct of this nature

will not be tolerated by the courts."

In a second test case, the court dismissed a police appeal against £51,000 awarded to Claudette Thompson for false imprisonment, malicious prosecution and assault.

Lord Woolf, sitting with Lord Justice Auld and Sir Brian Neill, said: "The conduct of the police can only be described as outrageous and totally inconsistent with their responsibilities. In Mr Thompson's case, senior police officers were involved in a malicious prosecution."

The costs of both appeals were awarded against the police.

The three judges said that, in future, juries should be given directions by judges on the reasons for awarding damages and their level. For wrongful arrest and imprisonment, basic damages of £500 should be awarded for the first hour a person was deprived of their liberty, followed by additional sums on a reducing scale. They recommended a maximum £3,000 award for a person wrongly kept in custody for 24 hours.

In cases of malicious prosecution, basic damages should begin at about £2,000 for proceedings

lasting as long as two years, and £10,000 if the case went to the Crown Court. If malicious prosecution resulted in a conviction which was set aside at appeal, the sum would be bigger.

In cases where exemplary damages were claimed, the judge should explain to the jury that they were in effect a "windfall" for the plaintiff. The maximum would be £50,000 awarded for bad conduct by officers of superintendent rank and above. They would usually range from £5,000 to £25,000.

Outside the court, Mr Hsu said he was very disappointed with the result. "The memory is always there, it never goes away. I never like to know anything about the police. I am afraid of the police."

Sadiq Khan, his solicitor, said: "It was not the money that mattered. These officers acted outrageously. Five years after the initial incident no officer involved has been punished or even disciplined. The jury made the award of damages to make examples of these officers and to this day Mr Hsu has not even received an apology for the way he was treated."

Ms Thompson, 31, was not in

court for the ruling. Raju Bhatt, her solicitor, said the judgment was a slap in the face for Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, who had argued for exemplary damages of only £10,000 in each case. He said: "The Commissioner and the Police Federation had tried to ridicule these victims of police crime as if what happened to them did not matter."

David Hamilton, solicitor for the Metropolitan Police, said the guidelines introduced a more sensible framework for the whole question of determining damages. The court had sent a message that the purpose of exemplary damages was "to introduce an element of punishment if the overall value of the award without it is insufficient to mark disapproval."

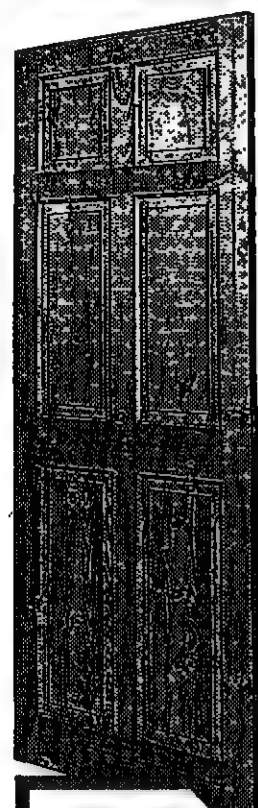
A spokeswoman for Scotland Yard said no officer involved in either case had been disciplined. In Ms Thompson's case no complaint had been received. Mr Hsu had complained but had not given a statement while the civil court proceedings were outstanding.

Leading article, page 21
Law, page 34

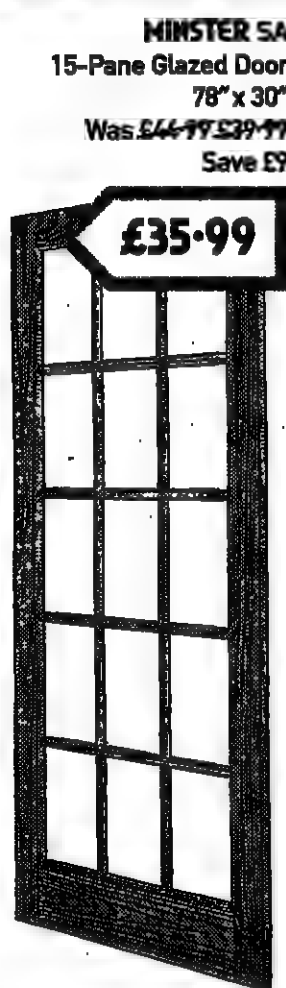


Kenneth Hsu, "disappointed" by the judgment, said that he was now afraid of the police

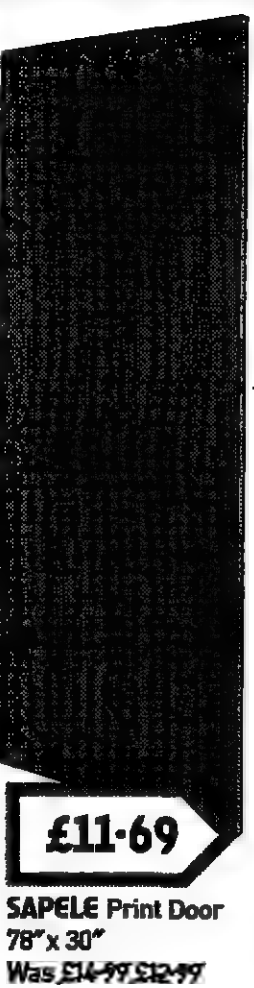
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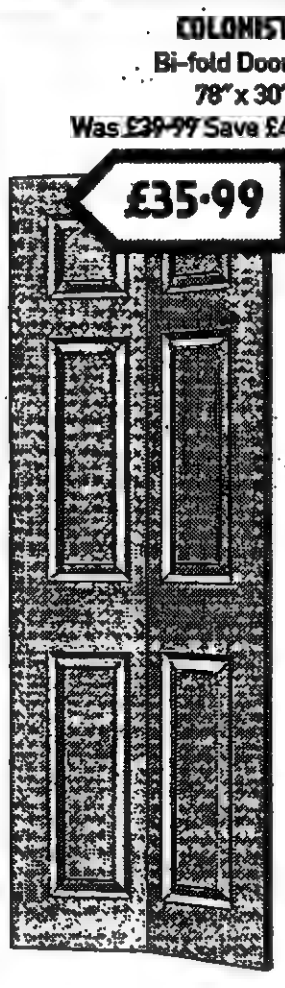
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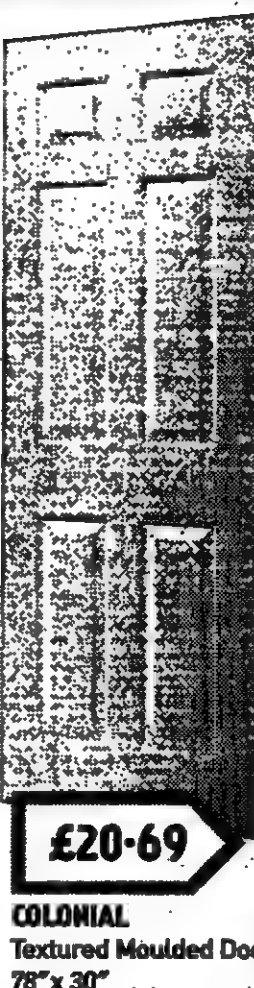
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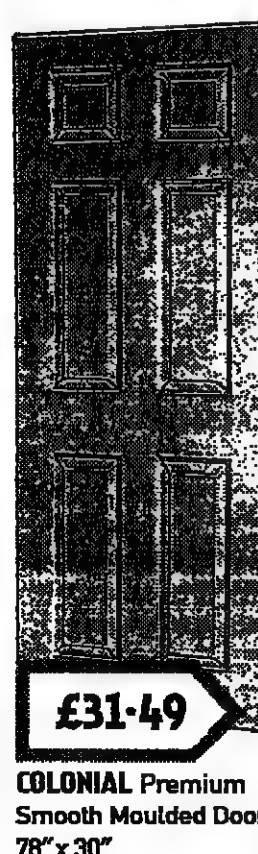
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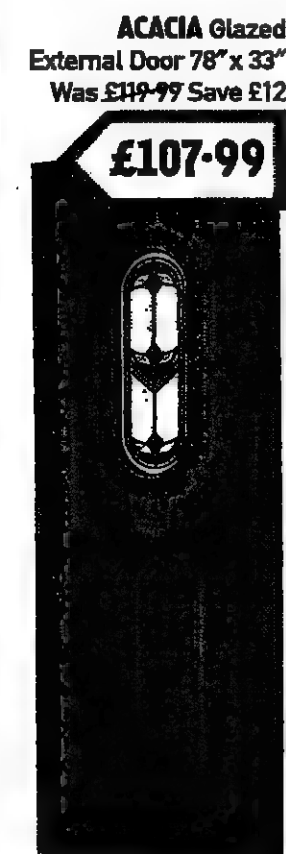
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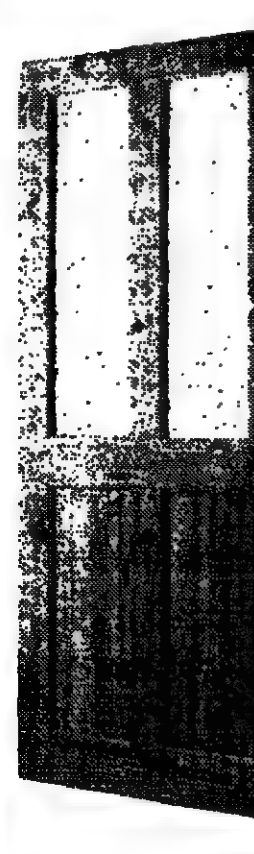
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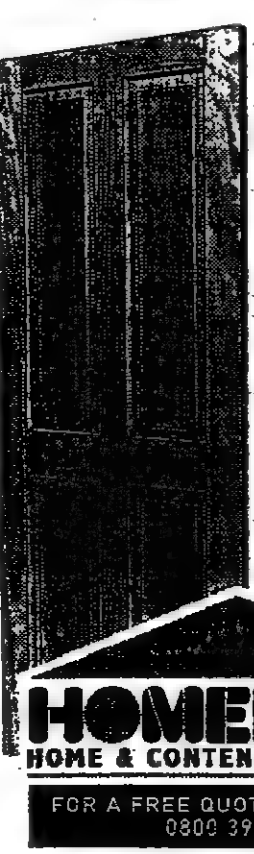
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Europe backs prosecution of sadomasochists

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN STRASBOURG

BRITAIN was entitled to prosecute three men for causing injuries during sadomasochistic sex, the European Court of Human Rights ruled yesterday. The decision confirms limits to rights of privacy.

The Home Office welcomed the unanimous decision by nine Strasbourg judges as vindicating the British courts in a test case that pitted individual rights to privacy against the public need to safeguard health and safety. The judges also said there was no evidence that British courts were biased against homosexuals.

The Strasbourg case was brought by Roland Jaggard, 49, Anthony Brown, 61, and Colin Laskey, who died in 1995, aged 52. They were among 16 men arrested after a police operation called "Operation Spanner" acquired video tapes in 1987 which showed them engaging with 44 other men in violent sexual acts involving whips, sandpaper and fish-hooks.

The three men were convicted of causing bodily harm, wounding and other offences, although the "victims" were consenting participants. They were jailed for up to six months.

The three sought to have the verdicts overruled by Strasbourg on the ground that it breached Article 8 of the European Human Rights Convention, which says: "Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence." The judges found that the prosecution was justified under exceptions covering "the protection of health".

The case differed from previous decisions on sexual rights because "the applicants' sadomasochistic activities involved a significant degree of injury or wounding", the judges said. Britain was "unquestionably entitled to seek to

regulate through the operation of the criminal law activities which involved infliction of physical harm".

Mr Jaggard, of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, Mr Brown, of the Yardley district of Birmingham, and the late Mr Laskey, from Pontypridd, South Wales, had been backed by civil-liberties organisations in their Strasbourg action. The group Liberty had pointed out that all those convicted had consented to the acts and none had needed hospital treatment.

The court doubted that the men's activities were private because a "considerable number of people were involved in the activities, which included the recruitment of new members, the provision of several specially equipped chambers and the shooting of many video tapes which were distributed among members".

The sex acts involved hot wax, sandpaper, fish-hooks and needles, and ritualistic beatings with spiked belts, stinging nettles and a cat-o-nine-tails. Those receiving the abuse used a code word if they wanted to stop the "punishment".

Peter Tatchell of OutRage, the group that advocates homosexual rights, said: "This decision indicates that the Convention is seriously deficient and needs updating. It has failed to protect the rights of consenting adults in private to make their own sexual choices free from state interference."

Sadomasochism should not be illegal unless it occurred without consent, involved children or caused permanent injury, he said. "It is profoundly undemocratic that a form of sexual behaviour has been criminalised by the court without any parliamentary debate or approval."

Peter Brookes, page 20

Microlight caused havoc over airport

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

A MICROLIGHT aircraft disrupted several scheduled flights above Glasgow Airport when its pilot became hopelessly lost after folding his map the wrong way.

Jaysalsh Madhvani, 44, from New Barock, Hertfordshire, had covered 1,200 miles in four days while taking part in a round-Britain microflight rally before flying unannounced into the airport's airspace on June 22 last year.

Paisley Sheriff Court was told yesterday that the microlight's presence led to incoming passenger planes being "stacked" and prevented from landing. The pilot of a British Airways jet arriving from Manchester had to take evasive action.

Depute Fiscal David Harvey said that although no lives were put at risk, Madhvani had caused considerable disruption. Air traffic control at Glasgow asked the police to intervene and a police helicopter finally inter-

cepted the microlight at Kirkcubrecht, north of Glasgow, and followed it to Cumbernauld, where it landed.

Mr Harvey said the pilot told police he had folded his map in the wrong place and that he and his passenger were completely lost. The principal difficulties were caused because Madhvani failed to make contact with Glasgow air traffic control when he had earlier landed in a field at Bishopston.

Madhvani, who admitted breaching air traffic control laws, told Sheriff James Spay: "In effect, I flew off my map." He had now qualified as an instructor and hoped to make that his full-time occupation. "I have been flying for six years and have never broken any rules before," he said.

Admonishing him, Sheriff Spay said he accepted it had been a case of human error. "You had no intention to deliberately fly into this airspace."

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Rifkind's candour puts Tories on popular side of EMU row

The Foreign Secretary is not supposed to make "a slip of the tongue under pressure", as Kenneth Clarke yesterday said. But the Foreign Secretary's comment that the Government was "hostile" to a single currency, this may have been indiscreet, but it was not a slip of the tongue. The majority of the Cabinet is hostile to a single currency, and does not mind the public knowing. But the official government line is to keep open its options, "wait and see" or "negotiate and decide" according to taste. So Mr Clarke was defending the Government's formal position, while Mr

Rifkind was revealing the private real one. The latter's candour shows how hard, if not impossible, it is for the Tory leadership to maintain even a facade of unity on monetary union.

John Redwood and David Heathcoat-Amory quickly intervened to welcome what Mr Rifkind had said as representing a significant admission. Mr Rifkind and Downing Street spokesmen later claimed that he had not been saying anything new, and talk of being "not neutral" and "hostile" had merely reflected the Cabinet's discussion a month ago on the prospects for a single currency.



Mr Rifkind had then announced the Cabinet's view that it was "very unlikely" that joining monetary union in January 1999 would be in Britain's interests, though the Government was not ruling it out.

Mr Clarke has not disguised his impatience with some of his colleagues for raising the issue. On his view, the sole result of the two hours' discussion was that Mr Rifkind inserted the word "very" before unlikely. Mr Clarke only

agreed to this form of words because he believes the existing position of keeping open Britain's options was reaffirmed. It is precisely that concord that Mr Rifkind appeared to challenge on the Today programme, which is why Mr Clarke gave his dismissive reaction.

The episode is double-edged for the Tories. It underlines the Tories' deep-seated divisions on Europe and that is electorally damaging. These differences were seized upon last night by Gordon Brown to claim that the continued Tory civil war over Europe was damaging the national interest.

But by reinforcing the impression of government hostility to a single currency, Mr Rifkind put the Tories on the popular side of the argument — though Labour has been distancing itself from the possibility of joining in the first wave.

The real battle is, of course, for the future direction and leadership of the Tory party. It is significant that the two Cabinet ministers who most pushed a sceptic line this year have been from the Centre-Left, Stephen Dorrell and Mr Rifkind. Both have leadership ambitions and need to broaden their base to

attract the support of more sceptic MPs.

Mr Clarke is dismissive of these manoeuvres. He is in the paradoxical position of sticking to the Cabinet's formal policy yet being out of line with the preferences of most of his colleagues. He has been on the defensive for the past 18 months in face of the Cabinet's step-by-step shift to more open hostility to a single currency and has looked increasingly isolated. But as Chancellor he still has a nuclear power, the threat of resignation, which he has used to block an outright commitment in the Tory manifesto ruling out pos-

sible British entry into a single currency. It is a fine line between "very unlikely", "not neutral" and "hostile" and such a pledge. This is, of course, all an exercise in positioning rather than policy-making. Even if Britain does not enter a single currency in the first wave, Mr Clarke believes we will go in within a few years if monetary union proves to be a success. He and his allies hope that by keeping the question open they will have greater freedom of manoeuvre in the next Parliament.

PETER RIDDELL

Wirral South by-election

Labour candidate meets the voters in US-style 'blitz'

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

LABOUR has adopted an American-style campaign technique to bolster its support in Wirral South.

Party workers are taking Ben Chapman, their candidate in next Thursday's by-election, on "blitzing" tours of the constituency, knocking on doors and offering voters the chance to meet him and shake his hand. The idea is to maximise personal contact, bringing him face to face with thousands more people than would be possible during traditional canvassing.

A sign hanging at Labour's campaign headquarters in New Ferry yesterday showed the tally so far: "Ben's blitzing: 15,354".

The operation is conducted at speed, with an advance guard calling at houses and the candidate following close behind. When a willing supporter is identified, the signal is given for Mr Chapman, a 50-year-old former civil servant, to jog up to the door. He aims to shake 50 hands an hour.

Traditional canvassing is intended to discover voters' intentions. Labour says that "blitzing" is about reinforcing support, and giving people the

chance to see the person they are being asked to vote for.

A Labour spokesman said: "You don't actually ask people about how they are voting. You literally ask, 'Would you like to meet Ben Chapman?'"

"Blitzing is where we want to increase the profile of a candidate with the voters so they have actually met him and can feel more strongly about voting for him."

Yesterday Tony Blair joined his party's campaign effort in Wirral South, flashing toothy smiles and vigorously shaking hands as he was feted first on the shopfloor of Candy Domestic Appliances, then in a walkabout along one of the less prosperous high streets.

He basked in adulation as he discovered that new Labour was as welcome as old Labour in the wards with the highest unemployment and social problems. Surrounded by a growing entourage of television cameramen and photographers, he was led beaming through the stage-managed affair.

At the Taste Buds cafe, he gushed about the busy lunchtime trade at Tracy's Florists; he was given a red rose buttonhole; at Kwik Save he

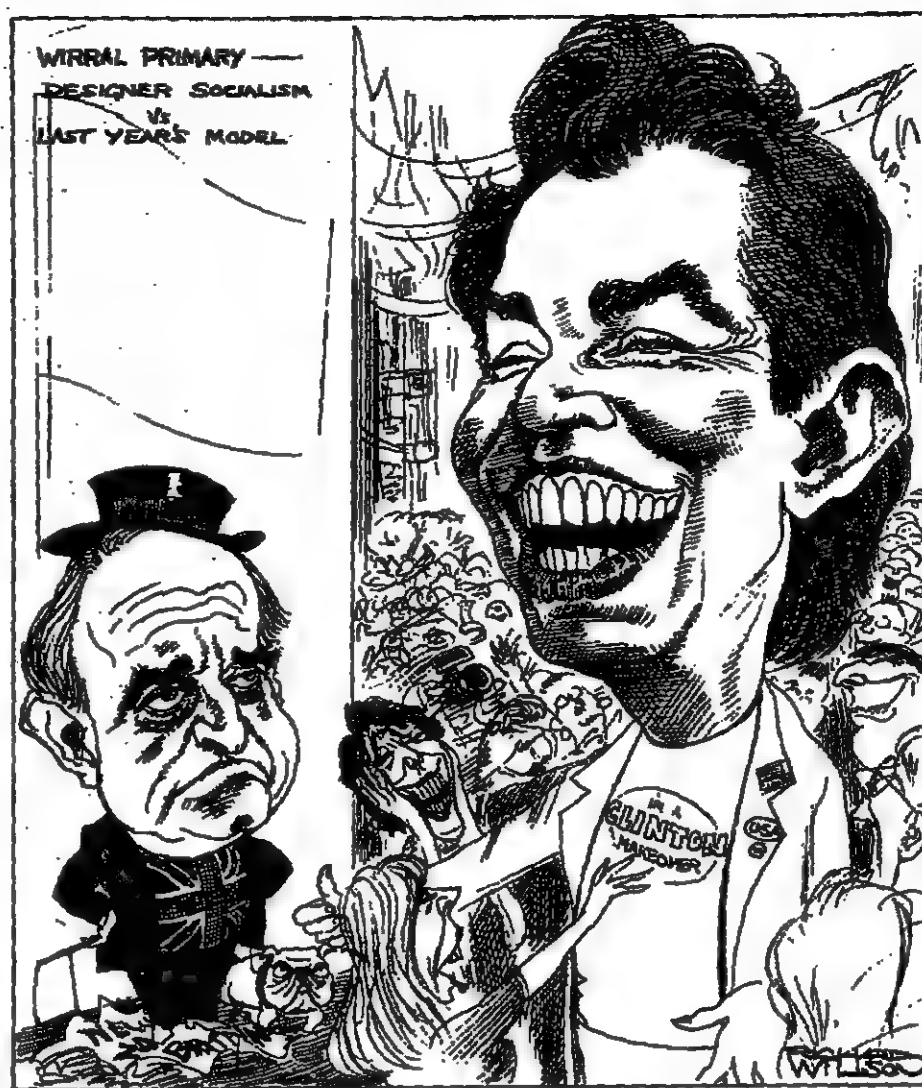
learned that the manager, Graeme Heatherwick, had been a great fan of his predecessor, John Smith. Mr Blair gave him a pat on the arm before moving on.

As the media crown threatened to get out of control, Sue Evans, pushing her three-year-old son, Lewis, in a buggy, was ushered into Mr Blair's presence. Afterwards, Lewis asked his mother: "Is he a footballer?"

The warmth was in sharp contrast to the windswept corner of a hotel car park chosen by Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, William Hague, the Welsh Secretary, and Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, to outline their concern about Labour's constitutional policy.

As the wind blew, Dr Mawhinney unveiled the latest Tory poster. It showed a blank flag with the words: "Labour's Union Jack... New Labour, No Britain." The ministers had flown to Merseyside that morning and were heading straight back after the photocall.

Dr Mawhinney looked momentarily lost for words when he asked why the Tories were hoisting the white flag of



surrender in Wirral South before he launched back into his theme that Labour's plans for the regions would put the integrity of the United Kingdom at risk.

Mr Forsyth said: "We have always taken our United Kingdom for granted. We can do so no more. Labour's irresponsibility and totally di-

vergent schemes for England, Scotland and Wales threaten to tear our country apart, leading to separation of the member nations and the fragmentation of England itself."

Mr Blair's aides refused to confirm rumours that he is planning a third and last visit to Wirral South on the eve of next Thursday's poll. The Lab-

our leader looked pleased with his visit. As he climbed into his car, somebody shouted: "Kick out the Tories." The cheers were ringing in his ears.

1992 general election: Barry Porter (C, 25,500); Helen Southworth (Lab, 17,407); Ed Cunliffe (LD, 6,580). Majority: 8,183.

William Rees-Mogg, page 20

Blair to propose curbs on house sale gazumping

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TONY BLAIR is about to present Labour plans to penalise homeowners who pull out of a sale after receiving a better offer for their property.

He is preparing for a Labour government to launch a purge on "gazumping", with curbs under which a seller would pay the purchaser's conveyancing and survey costs if the sale collapsed without good reason.

The Labour move, expected to be announced within the next month, is intended to prevent the expected surge in gazumping. Estate agents have recently reported a sharp increase in the problem, especially in London and the South East where the property market is recovering more rapidly than in other regions.

Mr Blair is understood to be determined to curb one of the main causes of an overheating property market, fearing that house price inflation over the coming year would increase pressure on a Labour government to raise interest rates.

Labour's plans, drafted by Nick Raynsford, the housing spokesman, will be published for consultation among lenders, lawyers and estate agents, to be followed by a new code of conduct to regulate the housing market. Senior Labour figures are attracted by the so-called "lock-out" agreement practised by some estate agents, under which vendors have to sell at an agreed price

as long as the sale is completed by a specified date.

Labour is prepared to introduce legislation to underpin changes to housing sales, but hopes that codes of practice among lawyers and estate agents would in any case create a new culture in which vendors pledged to keep to the agreed price. "A purchaser would soon become suspicious if the vendor refuses to sign an agreement. There might be ways round a code but at least the purchaser knows the sort of person he is dealing with."

A homeowner who fails to give a good reason for backing out of a deal would have to pay the buyer's full conveyancing and survey costs. It would also curb the reverse practice of "gazundering", common in a falling property market, in which buyers renege on an agreed price and put in a lower offer at the last minute.

Last week the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors announced proposals for a voluntary contract to protect homebuyers from being gazumped. It said the "standard personal contract" would act as a deterrent against one side withdrawing or trying to renegotiate the terms after the offer is accepted. But Labour sees as too complex the proposal to make the buyer pay the vendor compensation of 5 per cent interest above the bank base rate on the agreed purchase price from the date of the agreement.

Straw pledges to fight anti-gay prejudice

BY ANDREW PIERCE

JACK STRAW, the Shadow Home Secretary, confirmed last night that a Labour government will abolish the law that bars local authorities from portraying homosexuality in a positive light.

In a speech to Stonewall, the gay rights organisation set up after the Section 28 legislation passed into law in 1988, Mr

Straw promised homosexuals a better deal from a Labour government. Labour would enter the general election with a commitment to tackle prejudice.

He compared the example of Stephen Lawrence, the black teenager killed in a racist attack, with the gay victims of "queer bashing" gangs. In so many cases, in Stephen Lawrence's case, in many involving gay people, the perpetrators

get away with their crimes. It is why we are committed to a strategy of zero tolerance to make the streets safe for everyone regardless of the colour of their skin or sexual preference," he said.

He added: "This law was brought forward for the worst of reasons. It dealt with no serious mischief... It gives gratuitous offence to those who are gay while solving no other problem."

Sceptics seek TV ban on Brittan and Kinnock

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

A GROUP of Tory Eurosceptics called yesterday for European Commission officials to be banned from appearing on television during the general election campaign.

More than 50 MPs wrote to the BBC and the Independent Television Commission to warn them that impartiality guidelines could be breached if spokesmen for the Brussels executive were given too much media exposure. They claimed that that Commissioners and their officials cannot be described as impartial because of their commitment to European integration.

Bill Cash, Tory MP for Stafford, who is leading the campaign, complained that Neil Kinnock and Sir Leon Brittan, Britain's two Commissioners, were always presented on television as independent "gurus" on Europe. "If the broadcasters are going to be impartial, they must not put people on who have taken an oath of support for European integration."

In letters to Sir Christopher Bland, chairman of the BBC, and Sir Peter Rogers, chief executive of the Independent Television Commission, the MPs urged the Corporation to

stick to its Charter and the Commission to the Broadcasting Acts in their reporting of European issues. "These require impartiality in respect of matters of public policy and you will, of course, give due weight to alternative views and spokesmen of all parties fighting the election."

"We are aware that European Commissioners and officials intend to seek to participate in the general election. It seems to us that there are quite enough people who are actual contestants in the election to make unnecessary for you to call upon Commissioners and officials."

The letter continued: "Furthermore they have a complete commitment to further integration by virtue of their oath of office and therefore, by no stretch of the imagination could they be seen as impartial observers. We would be glad to have your confirmation that our observations will be fully taken into account and acted upon in the public interest during the election."

Geoffrey Martin, head of the European Commission in Britain, said it was "nonsense" that the Commission would interfere in the election. "We have said that if Eurosceptics, of any party, attempt to use Europe as a political ploy, deploying myths, distortions and inaccuracies in their arguments, the Commission will respond vigorously with the facts. This remains the case."

The BBC and the ITC said that they had yet to receive the letters.



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Italy faces Grand Prix race boycott over Senna death trial

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN BOLOGNA

A TOP Italian motor-racing manager yesterday said that, if Frank Williams was convicted of manslaughter for the death of Ayrton Senna, the Brazilian racing champion, then Benetton and other leading Formula One teams would refuse to race in Italy again.

"It would be a very difficult choice, but I do not think we would race in Italy," Flavio Briatore, the Benetton team manager said. "Any great racing stable has many international partners, it invests and produces a great deal, it creates highly qualified jobs... Why put all that at risk? Why bring a racing team to a country where you can be put in prison for an accident?"

The trial of Mr Williams and two other Williams Formula One team members opens today near the Imola race track where Senna died in 1994.

The small town of Imola, near Bologna, known for its ceramics, is under siege from the world's media, with large contingents from Britain and Brazil. Brazilian journalists said Senna's family would be "hanging on every word" from the makeshift courtroom — normally a dance hall — which only holds 60 people.



Williams accused with two colleagues

Proceedings will be relayed to an adjoining hall by closed-circuit television. Maurizio Passarini, the Bologna public prosecutor, will claim that the Williams team caused the death of Senna by modifying the steering column of his car. Senna died when his car hit a bend at the Imola racing track during the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola on May 1, 1994.

Signor Passarini has compiled a technical report over the past two and a half years which he says points to the re-welding of the steering column as the reason for the crash. The steering column pierced Senna's helmet "with the force of a bullet", he said. He said the prosecution team had made a "computerised reconstruction" of the fatal crash.

But there are also reports, based on photographs, that Senna's car hit debris left on the track from an earlier crash. This would shift blame away from Mr Williams and other team members toward members of the Imola track management, who are also facing trial.

Mr Williams is being charged with Patrick Head, the Williams team technical director, and Adrian Newey, chief designer at the time of the crash. The trial is expected to adjourn until the end of the month.

Signor Passarini's case is based on advice from an Italian team of experts which includes former engineers from Ferrari, racing drivers, academic experts, and Roberto Nasetto, a former director of the Imola track.

Signor Briatore told *La Repubblica* that the prosecution was approaching the case "as if it was a traffic accident. But have you ever heard of a traffic accident in which the man who built the car is prosecuted?"



Alain Ducasse at his Louis XV restaurant in Monte Carlo. He divides his time between this and another place in Paris

Gastronomes in a stew as Michelin serves master chef with six stars

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

ALAIN DUCASSE, the French master chef, is set to make culinary history by winning a total of six Michelin stars in the new edition of the gastronomic bible next month.

No chef has been awarded more than three, but M Ducasse, 40, owns two of France's top 20 restaurants — the three-star Louis XV in Monaco, and the one he took over when Joel Robuchon, another three-star chef, retired in August.

For French foodies the question of whether M Ducasse earns three more stars for his second restaurant is more than a mere numbers game, being a crucial decision affecting the very philosophy of French cookery. While few rivals would dispute that M Ducasse's vol-

lume *aux cuisses de grenouilles* [frogs' legs] is a poem on a plate, many argue that a chef who divides his time between two restaurants is half, and not twice, as good as a chef with one.

By tradition, the French culinary supreme is expected to supervise every aspect of his kitchen and restaurant, from the *amuse-gueule* to the candlesticks. M Ducasse, however, leaves many details to underlings.

The simmering debate boiled over this week when *The Wall Street Journal* published an article describing M Ducasse as "more like... a chief executive than an executive chef". The paper quoted a rival who insisted that he, at least, was there to supervise the exact placement of the carrots on the plate.

M Ducasse, a farmer's son

from the Landes region who became France's youngest three-star chef in 1990, has dismissed the criticisms, pointing out that the greatest fashion designers do not personally cut the cloth to make their outfits. But therein lies the rub: three-star cuisine, say purists, is the equivalent of haute couture, in which each dish should carry the uniquely recognisable mark of its maker. Food by a chef "in absentia" smacks of off-the-peg production or, worse yet, brand-naming.

M Ducasse's self-defence — that he inspires the food rather than always having to cook it — is somewhat undermined by his position as one of the prime movers in a growing campaign to reinforce traditional values in French cuisine. Nothing could be less traditional than a chef not in his kitchen.

The only one to escape from a 1984 plane crash in which five died, M Ducasse knows about survival. He is one of a new breed of businessmen chefs, adept at projecting and marketing a style of restaurant in which the minutiae of ambience and presentation are almost as important as the food.

As M Ducasse himself points out, his restaurants are very different: the Monaco establishment reflecting Mediterranean flavours and the Paris one offering a more classical style of cooking.

On a recent visit to the renamed Alain Ducasse restaurant in Paris, M Ducasse was not in evidence but the diners — paying, for the most part, more than £90 (£100) each for the experience — seemed not at all put out that the chef's fingerprints were not on the plates.

Euro MPs brand Brussels over BSE 'negligence'

FROM CHARLES BREMMER IN STRASBOURG

BRITAIN and the European Commission were condemned yesterday for mishandling the "mad cow" epidemic in an overwhelming vote by the European Parliament.

In a show of parliamentary muscle-flexing, the Strasbourg body gave Jacques Santer, the Commission President, nine months to reform the European Union executive or face moves to dismiss him and all his colleagues.

After a six-month inquiry into BSE and weeks of political wrangling, the Parliament vented its anger through the endorsement of a report that catalogues Britain's and the

Commission's failure to tackle the epidemic since the late 1980s. In charges dismissed by Downing Street as "tosh", Britain stands accused of negligence, duplicity, in-

competence and complacency about the disease. Led by all three main political groups, the Parliament voted by 422 to 49 with 48 abstentions for a resolution that backed the report and separately "condemns the behaviour of the UK Government and its mismanagement of the BSE crisis". It also deplores the refusal of Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, to appear before the inquiry.

However, the Parliament rejected separate motions to force the Commission to demand a refund of the £500 million compensation paid so far to British farmers and to summon Mr Hogg to the European Court. This weakened similar recommendations in the BSE report. Commission officials said they did not expect to take action on either call.

In European terms, the main lesson from the Parliament's BSE exercise was the assertion of some legislative power over the Commission, a right that was extended in the Maastricht treaty of 1992. MEPs drew satisfaction yesterday from what they viewed as the modest success of the overwhelming agreement ob-

tained among the fractious 626-member house on a "conditional" censure motion against the Commission. If Mr Santer fails to implement big changes in personnel and policy, the Parliament could vote to censure him in November. Such a vote, which requires a heavy majority, would force the whole Commission to resign.

There had been consensus among the three groups — the Socialists, Christian Democrats and Liberals — to avoid the use of what is regarded as the Parliament's "nuclear weapon" when most of the alleged failings were blamed on the Commission headed by Jacques Delors, the last President. Reimer Boge, the German president of the BSE inquiry, which was the first such Congress-style hearing under Maastricht powers, said the exercise had been a complete success and that it had marked a turning point in the Parliament's relations with the Commission.

Mr Santer has already gone some way towards appeasing the Parliament by ordering a shake-up that puts Emma Bonino, one of the most popular Commissioners, in charge of a new consumer safety division. He has promised to discipline civil servants found at fault and to work for a revolution in the common agricultural policy that would promote quality rather than quantity in food production.

However, a handful of MEPs, led by Jose Hattart, a Belgian Socialist, are to call for a vote of censure today, although they stand almost no chance of winning the necessary majority. Strongly behind the censure vote is Philippe de Villiers, leader of Sir James Goldsmith's French "Europe of Nations" party.

M de Villiers, a right-wing candidate in the last French presidential election, said that the BSE report had "demonstrated the bankruptcy of the Commission". The main culprit for that was M Delors, he said.

‘The mad cow report has demonstrated the bankruptcy of the European Commission’

French museums mislay art treasures

Paris Hundreds of valuable artworks belonging to the French state have gone missing, according to a scathing report by government auditors which accuses national museum officials of gross mismanagement (Ben Macintyre writes).

At least 950 works of art from the national collection cannot be traced, the Cour des Comptes, the audit office, said. More than 100,000 paintings and sculptures are on loan to public bodies. Keeping track of the treasures is a complicated task and open to abuse.

Theophile Ribot's painting *The Good Samaritan*, for example, was found to have been loaned to the French Embassy in Poland 66 years ago and has since materialised in the National Museum in Warsaw; a medallion by Henri Matisse, destined for a museum in Nice, was

simply left in the back of a removal van; valuable Sévres china from the Louvre was lost or smashed during another relocation. Some of the missing artworks have subsequently resurfaced at auctions.

The library of lost items reflects the wealth of France's artistic heritage. Experts say that, with so many treasures to choose from, local authorities simply did not bother to note their whereabouts.

Seizure of £4m Mafia property ordered

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

ITALIAN magistrates yesterday ordered the confiscation of £4 million Mafia property, including a stable of top race horses and a wine-producing company, as a row broke out over a proposal for the state to remove the children of gangsters from their parents to prevent them learning Mafia values.

In the southern port city of Bari the magistrates ordered that a property belonging to Trifone Cellamare, 50, and his son, Savino, 28, be sequestered. It is one of the biggest such seizures of alleged Mafia property so far in Italy, judicial sources said. The property included 13 race horses, ten lorries and luxury cars and the contents of several bank accounts. The two men were described as leading members of the Mafia based in the southern city of Foggia.

Meanwhile, controversy raged over a proposal by the Mayor of Corleone that the children of mobsters should be placed in state care or given foster homes. Giuseppe Cipriani said such steps were necessary "to give hope to young people who are subject to the oppressive presence of the Mafia".

However, the idea was opposed by Judge Pierluigi Vigna, the country's leading anti-Mafia magistrate, who said 2,000 minors, the sons of supergrasses, had already had to leave their homes, schools and friends as their parents adopted new identities, becoming state

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Long march ends for 'immortal leader' Deng

Food for thought

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Attack

Nato applicants 'sold weapons to terrorist regimes'

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

SEVERAL countries hoping to join Nato soon have sold arms to regimes that sponsor terrorism, according to reports of leaked Central Intelligence Agency documents.

Poland, a front-runner to join the North Atlantic security alliance this spring, made five shipments to Iran of T72 tanks, the most recent last summer, according to the "top secret" report cited by *The Washington Times*.

The newspaper's leak comes as Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, is touring nine European capitals. She

has put the expansion of Nato at the top of her agenda in her talks with European and Russian leaders.

The CIA said yesterday that it could not comment on the existence or content of any documents. According to the newspaper, the CIA report, dated October 2 and entitled "Arms transfers to state sponsors of terrorism", focuses on deals made last summer.

The report identifies China, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Russia and Iran as the main suppliers or brokers of arms to what are in Washington's view terrorist

nations. However, it also records details of deals by companies in Poland, Slovenia and Bulgaria, all of which are prospective candidates for Nato membership.

The 16 present members of Nato, meeting this spring to discuss enlargement, are expected to invite Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and possibly Slovenia to join. Other Central and East European nations have asked to be considered for membership of the alliance.

Trade with "terrorist states" is against American policy and the State Department's annual report calls for "bringing maximum pressure on states that sponsor and support terrorism by imposing economic, diplomatic and political sanctions and by urging other states to do likewise".

Albright promises to find Cyprus solution

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

AMERICA will redouble its efforts to get a political solution in Cyprus and calm rising tensions in the eastern Mediterranean, Madeleine Albright promised John Major yesterday.

Ms Albright, on her first visit to London as American Secretary of State, was also expected to brief Mr Major and Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, on her proposal for a joint Nato-Russia brigade and America's determination to overcome Russian opposition to the enlargement of Nato. Mr Major

was expected to give a warm welcome to her proposal, seen in Whitehall as an important signal that Washington is beginning to respond to Russian concerns.

In a survey of world trouble-spots, she was expected also to discuss Bosnia and the continuing allied efforts to bolster the fragile political process: Hong Kong and the likely fallout should Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese senior leader, die soon; and the trade and airline disputes between America and Europe that have soured transatlantic relations.

According to reports, the CIA has identified a company in the former Yugoslav republic of Slovenia that was involved in a deal to supply M60 tank transmissions and other tank parts to Iran. It appears that the Slovenian Government halted part of the shipment in response to American government protests.

The documents also say that Ukraine has concluded deals with Libya to sell short-range missiles and to service Libyan submarines and surface vessels. The Ukrainian Government says that no contracts have been completed.



Israeli Army police remove the last Beduin from their West Bank compound yesterday before bulldozers clear homes to make way for an expanded settlement

Israel steps up pressure to stop bizarre spy trial

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI yesterday summoned the Egyptian Ambassador to express displeasure over Cairo's decision to put on trial an alleged Israeli spy said to be mixed up in a bizarre case involving sexual intrigue and women's underwear soaked in invisible ink.

The diplomatic summons signalled a worsening of already strained relations over the affair, which began in November when Azzam Azzam, 34, one of the few Israelis working in Cairo, was arrested outside his hotel on the eve of the third Arab-Israeli economic summit.

Last night Israeli radio reported that David Levy, the Foreign Minister, had appealed to the United States to intervene to secure Mr Azzam's release. He is in a cell where his brother, Sami, told a Knesset committee he was "rotting away" in appalling conditions.

A personal appeal to President Mubarak by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, failed to secure his freedom. On Monday, Egypt announced that he will go on trial with three others on espionage charges that could end in the death penalty.

Also involved are Emad Abdelhamid Ismail, 34, an Egyptian, and two alleged female Mossad agents, Mona Ahmed Shawahna and Zahra Youssef Greis — both believed to be members of Israel's Arab minority. The women, in Israel, will be tried in absentia.

The charge-sheet says that Mr Azzam, an engineer in an

Israeli-owned textile factory near Cairo, confessed to taking underwear soaked in invisible ink from the Israeli women and giving it to Mr Ismail.

In a twist worthy of the imagination of John le Carré, Mr Ismail was instructed to use the ink to write invisible messages about Egypt.

The indictment said that the two women both slept with Mr Ismail after picking him up in an Israeli nightclub. Mr Ismail reportedly told police that between March and October the women gave him \$650 (£406) for information on Egypt, and promised him \$1,000 a month for any more information.

No date has yet been set for the hearing at the Supreme Court for Security. Egyptian media reports said Mr Azzam, a member of Israel's Druze Arab minority and the father of four children, initially confessed but now maintains his innocence.

Salah Tarif, a Druze member of the Israeli Knesset, demanded yesterday that Israel's ambassador, to Cairo be recalled to make clear the damage that the case would do to relations.

□ Moscow: Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, called for an intensification of Russia's role as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process after talks yesterday with Yevgeni Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister (Robin Lodge writes). However, there were no groundbreaking agreements or decisions.



Some of the children recently deported by the Saudis to Bombay

Saudis tell Indian beggars charity begins at home

FROM SUE LLOYD-ROBERTS IN BOMBAY

THE Saudis have had enough of the influx of beggars from the sub-continent: two flights from Saudi Arabia have recently departed their sad human cargo in the past two months and there are more to come.

Child beggars, preferably the handicapped, have been ferried to Saudi Arabia from the Muslim villages of West Bengal for over 20 years. It has become a big business, with thousands of rufpees at stake for the organisers of

the begging rings and rumours of the involvement of large investors, school teachers and local officials and politicians.

They target the season of Haj, when millions of devout Muslims descend on the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. For the average Indian such a trip is impossible, but 20 years ago two pilgrims from the Muslim region of Murshidabad in India made it and the trade began.

"When they got to Mecca," explains Mamun Haji, from Murshidabad and a former member of the West Bengal

legislature, "they looked so poor and scruffy that some Saudis, who are bound by the Koran to give 2½ per cent of their income to any beggar they meet, thought they were beggars and gave them their due." The word spread and thousands more went to claim this equivalent of a lottery win.

Perhaps tired of the financial strain on their citizens or as part of a crackdown on illegal immigration, the Saudi authorities have now rounded up touts and children and sent them back to India where the trail of fake passports, fake relations, duped

parents and abused children has begun to unfold.

Murshidabad is generously irrigated by the Ganges, and the sight of rich paddy fields, water buffalo and villages alongside palm-fringed waterholes gives a false sense of well-being. But the majority of peasants are landless day labourers who earn 15 rupees, or 25p a day, enough to buy a kilo (2½) of rice.

Brilliant flashes of a new silk sari, a heavy, gold-bangled wrist and a new brick house are the signs of a family who have benefited from Saudi largesse.

But it can easily go wrong too.

Forty-six boys in Bombay, newly arrived from Saudi Arabia and still imprisoned in the holding centre, are stuck in the quagmire of Indian bureaucracy.

The authorities in Bombay say they cannot send them home until the authorities in Calcutta contact them. Calcutta says they are waiting to hear from Bombay. Clearly no one is in a hurry to see these now "worthless" young children again.

□ Sue Lloyd-Roberts' report on child beggars will feature on the BBC Nine O'Clock News tonight

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Dr Thomas Stuttford on a medical dilemma posed by prostate cancer, the benefits of screening for cretinism, a health drink that isn't quite wine and why more women are able to laugh with confidence

To treat or not to treat? That is the question

Dr Geoffrey Forman, of Detroit, had a happy smile on his face as he sat down to dinner in the boardroom of the Royal College of Radiologists this week. Dr Forman, a radiation oncologist, attends more patients with prostate cancer than any other doctor in the United States — and therefore probably in the world. Dr Forman's contented look was not only because he had just delivered a lecture at the Royal College which had been universally acclaimed, but also because he is one of the happy men who knows that his PSA is only 0.4 and therefore that it is extremely unlikely, almost impossible, that he is suffering from cancer of the prostate himself.

Swedish doctors have been the most determined advocates of masterly inactivity. But, as Dr Forman said at the Royal College: "Could it be a coincidence that Sweden has the highest death rate from cancer of the prostate of any sophisticated Western country?"

If treatment of cancer of the prostate is to have any chance of success, it must be started early, at the very stage when some doctors will still be advocating the wait-and-see policy. Even if the spread is only to the lymphatic glands in the pelvis near the prostate, it is too long to have waited.

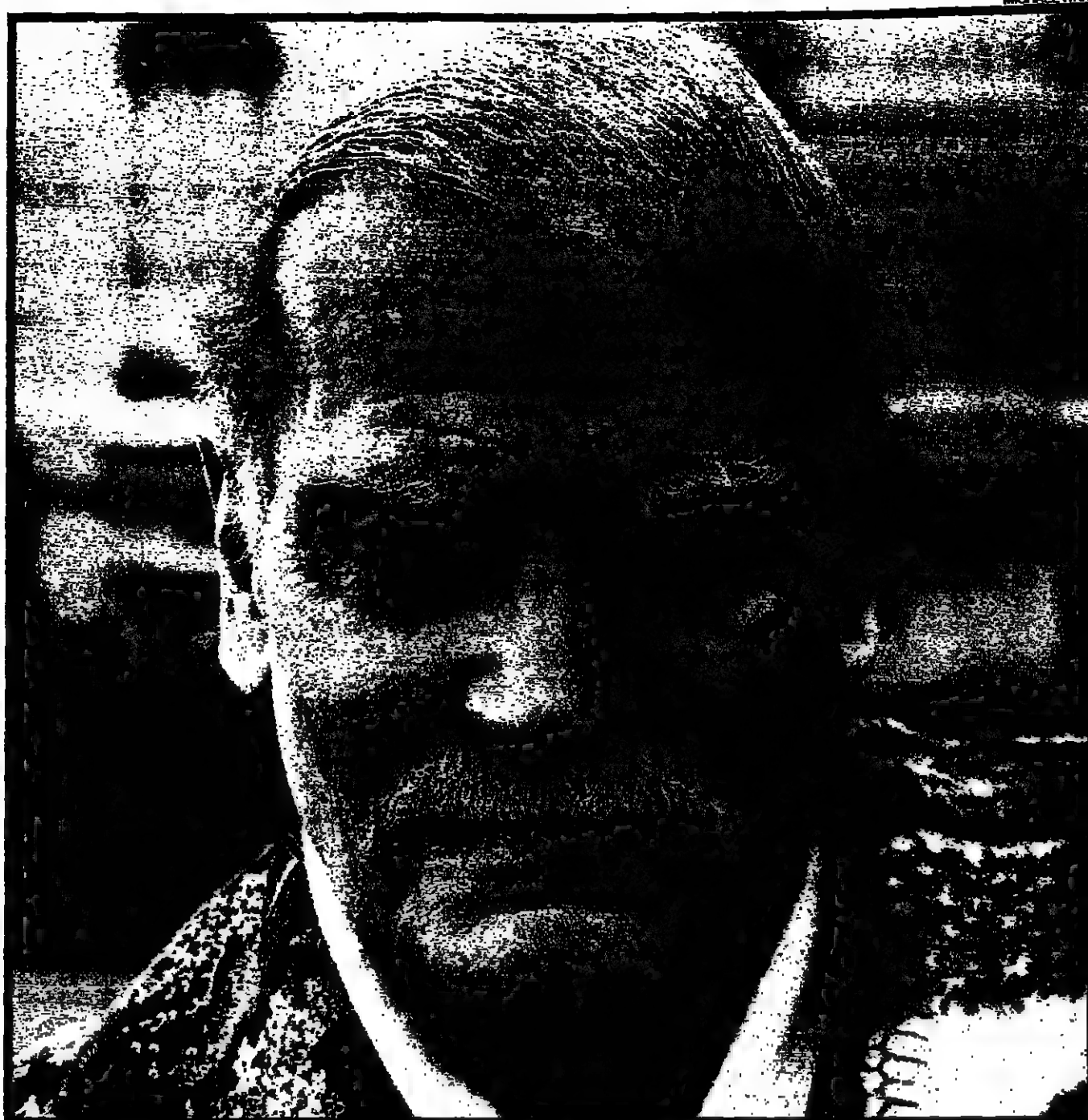
Dr Forman found that more than 92 per cent of his patients in America who had been treated early with mixed neutron and photon irradiation were free of prostate cancer ten years later. He says that a high PSA in a patient who has a small gland is a more ominous sign than the raised PSA would be if the gland was larger.

In those rare cases in which the cancer is found in a patient with a PSA below 4, 97 to 98 per cent of Dr Forman's patients are free of prostate cancer ten years later if they had immediate treatment. If the patient has a PSA of between 4 and 20, 92 per cent are also free of the tumour ten years later, but if the PSA is more than 20 when the tumour is diagnosed, the average long-term success rate is only 25-30 per cent.

Before everyone with a raised PSA rushes to the local hospital and asks for cyclotron treatment with the correct mixture of neutron and photon radiation accurately delivered by a carefully directed beam, they should think again, for no such treatment is available in Britain. The nearest centre is in Brussels.

The standard radiation used in Britain

Oliver survived 21 years with prostate cancer



Some doctors say that the best approach to prostate cancer is to wait and see. Despite the disease Lord Olivier lived to be 82

— which has no neutron component — has only a quarter of the effect on the cancer. Despite its greater power, mixed irradiation causes fewer side-effects on the bladder than standard treatment and there is a comparable rate of damage on the rectum. The impotence rate after standard radiation and after cyclotron treatment is also the same, and is about half that which follows radical surgery. In Britain, the dose of radiation given to an average tumour of 4-5cm is the same as given for a vocal cord tumour of an average size of 4 to 5mm. A larger dose would cause too much damage to other pelvic organs.

Treatment is still as much a matter of philosophy as medicine. In the very likely event of having a high PSA myself one day, and if I was rich enough, I would fly to Detroit for a mixture of neutron and photon irradiation. In Britain, I would opt for radical surgery.

Screen tests with a happy ending

ONE weekend recently I didn't return to my home in Norfolk, and so missed the anguished telephone call of someone whose grandchild had just been born with hyperthyroidism — a condition that in the past used to lead to cretinism.

The term cretin is now rarely used in its medical sense, as the disease has become so uncommon that its sole use seems to be as a tasteless insult.

A cretin is a child who has grown up physically and mentally handicapped, with a short stature, dry skin and an unusual face like a caricature of the late Lord Beaverbrook. These signs and symptoms occur only if the lack of thyroid activity is not diagnosed early, and treatment is started too late.

In the best maternity units, a baby's blood is tested for thyroid levels. If they are found to be low, the child is immediately started on additional thyroxine. So long as treatment is started at once, the child should develop as well as anyone else.

I was able to assure the worried grandmother that she was young enough to live to see her grand-daughter flourish, and — provided that the genes were right — win a scholarship to Oxford, or play hockey for the county.

Neo-natal screening for hyperthyroidism is an example of screening at its best. It is easily applied, there is no discomfort to the baby and any abnormality can be treated.

Cheers — and the best of health

It was Plato's opinion that nothing more excellent, nor more valuable, than wine was ever granted to mankind by the gods. But some people's drinking is limited for medical reasons — longstanding liver or any pancreatic disease, for instance.

This means that they have missed out on the proven cardio-protective powers of red wine and its as yet unexplained beneficial influence on all-cause mortality — the medical profession's jargon for the overall death rate. The benefits of alcohol are, of course, limited to those who drink in moderation.

Today, scientists are meeting at Downing College, Cambridge, to discuss the advantages to health of red wine. On the agenda will be the French paradox — the ability of the French to have a high fat diet but a low coronary heart disease rate. This is attributed to a liberal intake of red wine, crusted with a diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables as well as olive oil.

The scientists will also be

discussing an alcohol-free drink, Nutrivine, which is said to contain all of the polyphenols believed to be responsible for the health-giving properties of red wine. The polyphenols include flavonoids and other antioxidants which are contained in the skin and pips of grapes. When white wine is produced, these are removed early and play no part in its production.

Some years ago, Dr Alan Howard, of Cambridge, and associates who were interested in the relationship of antioxidants, free radicals and blood fats such as low-density lipoprotein cholesterol with the benefits of red wine drinking, decided to make use of the European "wine lake".

The scientists, with the co-operation of the University of Montpellier, devised a way of extracting all the polyphenols from the grape skins and seeds which were being processed at a distillery run by local farmers in the Aude region of France. The residue after distillation of red wine, made from cabernet sauvignon

grapes, contained 1.6g of polyphenols per litre of wine. Only 2g could be extracted from a litre of white wine.

The Cambridge team flavoured the extracted polyphenols with blackcurrant, diluted the mixture with Evian water, which is low in calcium (tap water when mixed with the grape extract forms a scum), and gave it to healthy volunteers in Cambridge.

Other local volunteers were provided with equivalent amounts of red or white wine.



Wine: a health boon

or white wine with added extracted polyphenols. The changes in the blood chemistry that are associated with the activity of the antioxidants, and therefore with the red wine's protective effect, were observed. In those volunteers who had red wine, the polyphenols, or the polyphenols plus white wine, the potential beneficial effects of polyphenols could be detected in the blood. But no such advantageous changes were seen in those who drank plain white wine.

The new drink, Nutrivine, is being launched in Malaysia in March. There many of the local residents are teetotal, but in future it is possible that their hearts, and the hearts of all non-drinkers, can be protected by drinking a sachet of the polyphenol extract suitably flavoured and dissolved in bottled water.

The mixture will be exactly equivalent medicinally and chemically — but not in other ways — to the half-bottle of claret I shall be enjoying in the Reform Club this evening.

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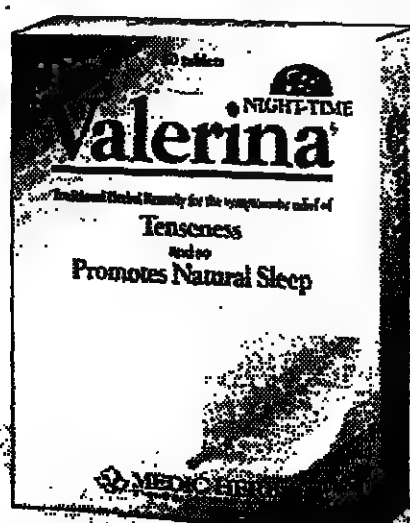
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Beautiful way to hold it all in

THE obstetrics and gynaecological department at St George's Hospital in London has had more than its share of newspaper publicity this week. However, professional discord in its fertility unit and the medical problems which are unleashed when a pregnant patient refuses the treatment that may be necessary to save a baby's life, shouldn't distract from its excellent research.

St George's has become an established centre for the treatment of prolapse, and associated incontinence. At least a third of women who have had children, and many who haven't, find that in early middle-age they start to leak urine when they cough, sneeze, or lift anything.

St George's has been carrying out a trial using a submucosal periurethral collagen injection instead of an operation to treat such stress incontinence. Collagen, similar to that used to enhance the pointing of the lips of a model, is injected around the urethra, the passage down which urine travels.

In trials reported in the *British Journal of Obstetrics*, periurethral injections were given to 32 women over the age of 65, 80 per cent of whom were cured without admission to hospital. Research undertaken by Mr Ash Monga and Mr Stuart Stanton at St George's, shows that the injection does not cause any obstruction to the urine, but the pressure transmitted by the collagen around the urethra encourages the bladder neck opening to remain closed.

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Branson has no time for slow coaches

Magnus Linklater wants Labour to back the West Coast railway

The last time a gale like this one tore across the country, I was sitting in a lounge car on the West Coast line, somewhere high up in the Border hills. We were stuck. The overhead lines had blown over, the back-up diesel had broken down, and the prospects of reaching Edinburgh by lunchtime were minimal. Actually, things could have been worse. Once the business passengers had exasperated down the telephone and cancelled their important meetings, we all sat back, had some coffee and proceeded to complain very enjoyably to each other for the next four or five hours. We couldn't say much about "bloody British Railways" any more, because we were there courtesy of Caledonian Sleepers Ltd under contract to InterCity, and the gale-torn cables were the responsibility of yet another company, Railtrack. So we moaned about privatisation instead.

But the stuff had gone out of the argument. For a start we were warm. We had hot food, newspapers, access to a telephone and friendly service. When I thought back to some of the last hours I have spent with British Rail in freezing carriages where "due to a powercut there will be no service from the buffet car", I found the notion of Richard Branson and his bid for the West Coast line strangely compelling. Anyone who has travelled on that route, once the jewel in the railway crown, knows that for 20 years successive governments have simply allowed it to crumble. Trains that were meant to travel at 110mph, cutting the journey from London to Glasgow to five hours, stuttered instead along old-fashioned tracks which suffered from subsidence, sharp curves, single-bore tunnels and outdated signalling equipment.

Surely, then, only the most curmudgeonly would complain about yesterday's news that Branson's Virgin Group has won the franchise to run the London to Scotland InterCity West Coast route, and that it intends to spend £750 million on a high-speed service which will cut the travelling time between London and Glasgow to less than four hours, to say nothing of typical Branson touches such as videos linked to the Internet and a home-to-station limousine service. If privatisation is irreversible then this must surely be the way forward. That depends, and it depends in the end on whether Labour can take a deep breath and embrace a privatisation which it castigated not so long ago as "the poll tax on wheels", predicting that it would be enough to bring down John Major's Government. It is hard now to remember how fervently people like Brian Wilson and Clare Short campaigned against the inequity of a privatised rail service. Barely 18 months ago, they were warning that this was a privatisation too far whose outcome hung in the balance. A succession of leaks suggested that safety was being compromised, the real cost of privatisation

tion disguised, and the sheer complexity of the deals was unworkable. At that time they probably had public opinion on their side.

Things have changed. With Railtrack sold and all the remaining franchises likely to be let by next month, there is evidence that instead of the predicted disaster, things are working not too badly. In its first survey, the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising found that the first eight franchised companies had all either maintained or improved on their punctuality and reliability performances. Some services had ordered new trains and were running additional services. The rail-users committee reported that complaints were down by 30 per cent. My own anecdotal evidence comes from a conversation with the chairman of a shortly-to-be-privatised service who had once predicted doom and decline, but who was now warm in his praises for a system which allowed him to claim refunds from Railtrack for unpunctuality, and which meant that his arrival times had improved by at least 20 per cent.

It has not all been good news. In the South West, Stagecoach has cut 39 services a day, and elsewhere there has been a marked failure to upgrade dilapidated rolling-stock. There are rumours that some of the deals are so tight that very shortly there will be demands for more public subsidy from some of the successful bidders, and there are still major questions hanging over the commitments made on new investment. But if share prices are anything to go by, there is no falling-off of enthusiasm, and if Branson's predictions are anything to go by, even the West Coast route, once known as the "InterStumpy Line" can be made profitable.

We were warm, we had hot food, access to a phone

That is, if a future Labour Government continues to support it. Privatisation does not mean that governments can wash their hands of the railways, only that they cost the Treasury less. Branson will get nowhere unless Railtrack provides the estimated £1.5 billion needed to improve the track, signalling and station system between London and Glasgow. The company has to be kept to its side of the bargain, and it will look to a future government to continue its subsidy. If Branson is to rise to what he calls "the greatest challenge ever" and turn the West Coast line around, he will need the backing and, indeed, enthusiastic support of a future Labour Government. As one of the few genuinely popular capitalists around, he could just persuade the party that it would be worth their while.

The alternative is for Labour to turn its back on the railways, to leave the privatised companies to their own devices and blame any shortcomings on its Tory predecessors. That would certainly make good propaganda. But it would guarantee a rotten train service.



THREE MEN GUILTY OF INFLECTING PAIN ON EACH OTHER... (EURO RULING)

The runes of Wirral

If the Conservatives do well at the by-election, the reason will be Europe

The last weeks of a government are always difficult: when the Government is generally expected to lose they can seem positively ghostly. I find myself peeping from the cross-benches in the House of Lords at the government front bench, then peeping down at the Labour front bench, and then making the mental transposition.

How many hopes will be frustrated, egos bruised, careers interrupted — perhaps never to be resumed? How many others will their first use of the coveted red boxes? Yet one has to remember. The election has still to be fought. All is still to play for.

Conservative support is beginning to rally, if somewhat hesitantly. Ten days ago the Westminster Conservatives sent a coachload of canvassers up to Wirral South to help in the by-election. They were taken to a Conservative area and found that most of the Tory voters were in a general election rather than a protest mood. Some of the support was unenthusiastic: "I suppose we shall have to vote for them." Yet few of those who had voted Conservative in 1992 were refusing to vote Conservative again at the by-election.

There have been similar by-elections before. On November 7, 1991, the Conservatives lost two seats, in Kincardine and Deeside and in Langbaurgh, which is north of Scarborough. Both seats were won back at the general election in April 1992, but the two by-elections were quite different. In Kincardine and Deeside there was a huge protest swing of 11.4 per cent to the Liberal Democrats; at the general election there was an even bigger swing back, of 13.5 per cent. Plainly that was the last of the protest by-elections of that Parliament, and it gave no indication of the general election result. In Langbaurgh there was a swing to Labour of only 3.6 per cent, followed at the general election by a swing back to the Conservatives of 3.1 per cent. As the Wirral South by-election comes so close to the general election, it seems more likely to produce a Langbaurgh-type result.

The Conservative vote will be particularly interesting. In 1992, Barry Porter won 25,590 votes; that was 50.8 per cent of the votes cast on an 82 per cent turnout; in 1987 he had won 24,821 votes, 50.2 per cent of the votes cast. At this by-election the turnout will fall, probably by about 20 per cent. A Conservative vote of 20,000

would therefore probably be enough to hold the seat. Current national opinion polls suggest that Conservative support has fallen by about a quarter since the last election; that would produce a Wirral vote of about 15,000. Anything less than that would be a disaster; anything close to 20,000 would be encouraging for the Conservatives; more than 20,000 would be a serious setback for Labour.

In Wirral South, the Liberal Democrat vote has already been squeezed: it fell from 10,779 to 6,581 between the general elections of 1987 and 1992. It may be squeezed still further this time, possibly almost to vanishing point. If Labour could get out the whole of its 1992 vote, plus half the Liberal vote, that would put it above the high target number of 20,000, but it would be an extraordinary achievement.

There is nothing the Conservatives can do to stop Liberal Democrats voting Labour. In the marginal seats in which Labour comes second, it seems likely that between a third and a half of Liberal Democrats will vote as they see fit, for the Labour candidate at the general election. Obviously, Tony Blair appeals to Liberal Democrats, and current polls are showing a fall of up to a third in the national support for the Liberal Democrats as a party.

This factor alone could decide the election. If Labour had won half the Liberal Democrat vote in 1992, it would have had 43.3 per cent of the popular vote, against the Conservatives' 41.9 per cent. Even in 1987, half the alliance vote would have given Labour 42.1 per cent of the popular vote against the Conservatives' 42.2. Labour would probably have been the largest party in both the last two Parliaments if it had appealed to Liberal Democrats as strongly as Tony Blair seems now to be doing.

There were 69 Conservative seats in the 1992 Parliament that would have gone to Labour on a 5 per cent swing. If Labour had won all of them, the 1992 result would have been more than reversed: Labour would have

had 340 seats to the Conservative 267. In the seats Liberal Democrat votes could have been decisive. Even in Great Yarmouth, which was the safest Conservative seat of these 69, the Liberal Democrats polled 13.6 per cent against a Tory majority of 10 per cent; in the more marginal seats a much smaller percentage of the Liberal Democrat vote would have put Labour in. It will be bad news for the Conservatives if the Liberal Democrat vote in Wirral South does completely collapse, as most people think it will.

One can use the Wirral result as a rough, and probably unreliable, ready reckoner for the general election. If one assumes some swing back to the Government, an even split of the Wirral vote would suggest a hung Parliament, a 3,000 majority would suggest a result like that of 1992, with the majority party holding about 335 seats to 265, and a 6,000 majority would mean a landslide, with seats divided 375 to 225. If, as early opinion polls suggested, Labour is going to win the by-election by a majority of more than 6,000, a Labour landslide at the general election becomes a possibility.

The new element in the general election campaign is Malcolm Rifkind's statement yesterday that the Government is hostile to the single currency, and his challenge to Germany on European policy. This is matched by Gordon Brown's declaration in America that Labour is now the pro-Europe party. Tony Blair has tried, with great political skill, to deprive the Conservatives of election issues, except for devolution and the House of Lords. Brown has been dangerously frank. Those voters who are afraid of Britain becoming part of a European superstate are served notice that they should not vote Labour. The Tories are becoming the anti-federalist party.

This will accelerate the return of Conservative voters; it may win for Labour some Europhile votes, but

there are many fewer of them. The European issue is increasingly becoming the outstanding election issue, which may suit Gordon Brown better than it suits Tony Blair. Yet the Conservatives will need to start winning Labour votes on the issue if they are to win the election. Margaret Thatcher turned the Labour Party's flank on John Major do so?

At the Conservative Party conference John Major did play rather clumsily with the strategy of turning the class battle upside down. He must now be tempted to leave the "progressive" middle class to Tony Blair, just as they have been left to the Democrats in the United States. The professors of liberal arts colleges in New England did not vote for Ronald Reagan, but the "hard hat" industrial workers did. Gordon Brown has put himself and his party at risk. He could easily be portrayed as a Shadow Chancellor who will not be able to put up expenditure and has promised not to put up taxes, and as the Scottish politician who wants to hand over British sovereignty to Brussels, if not to Berlin.

This would be a good electoral swap for the Tories. George Orwell's patriotic working class has always had more votes than the readership of *The Guardian*. Tony Blair has been amazingly successful in this class struggle so far; he has reassured the middle class and made them feel it is safe to vote Labour. John Major has exactly ten weeks left in which to persuade a section of the working class that they will find it even safer to vote Conservative.

Note in reply to Baroness Blatch: She said in the House of Lords (February 13): "If someone burlesques persistently, whether he steals a loaf of bread, a pint of milk, or 50p from a purse, he should receive a sentence of at least three years." I quoted her statement on February 17. In her letter to *The Times* yesterday, she writes: "William Rees-Mogg is wrong to imply that under the Crime (Sentences) Bill petty thieves will automatically receive a three-year prison sentence for a third conviction. They will not."

I never suggested that the proposed mandatory sentences applied to persistent petty thieves other than burglars, but they would apply to all persistent petty burglars, as Lady Blatch correctly stated in the House of Lords, and as I correctly quoted the baroness.

Art in Warhol's world

Rachel Campbell-Johnston on his vacuous legacy

It is ten years this week since Andy Warhol's life ended, not with a bang — though he is known the world over for being shot by a gun-toting man-hater — but a whimper. He died in his sleep after a routine gall-bladder operation in a New York hospital. The artistic revolution which he fired is fading towards a similarly inauspicious end. The ferocious Expressionist Willem de Kooning once snarled that Warhol had murdered art. But the truth is less dramatic. Diluted by countless derivations, the impact of Warhol's ideas gradually dissolves into weaker standards of achievement and increasingly watery aesthetic convictions.

Warhol's work has never moved me. It lacks the visceral passions that lift great art beyond its immediate cultural context. But this is not to deny its intellectual interest. Warhol has deservedly exceeded his own 15-minute allocation of fame. His museum in Pittsburgh ranks second only to that of Picasso in Paris as the largest single-artist museum in the world. Containing everything from used bus tickets to the odd shoe, it is a shrine to a man who turned all that he touched into a work of art.

For an artist who took pains to point out his own superficiality — "if you want to know about Andy Warhol just look at the surface of my paintings... there I am. There's nothing behind it" — this is the sort of brazen irony he would have enjoyed. It is the satire that sparkles at the centre of his work. His mass-produced images, so empty of content, so content with their emptiness, paradoxically have become some of the most distinctive in the world. All over the world people recognise the Campbell's soup cans and Marilyn Monroes as the work of the blank Czech with the platinum white wig.

Warhol may have declared that he thought it would be "terrific if everybody was alike", but the truth is that there was no one else quite like him. He had an intuition — a clairvoyance almost — which touched the flickering nerve of fashion. He recognised electronic technology to be a revolution, just as oil painting, etching or photography were once revolutionary.

His art may have been democratic in the sense that anyone could do it. Yet it took an Andy Warhol — and there was only one of those — to show the way. His fatal legacy was to finger the path to artistic fame to those who have little other claim to it.

Old-fashioned talent has been swept aside. Like the sad entourage of freaks in a torpid Warholian movie, young artists are spurred on to greater self-revelation by a voyeurism which makes them actually believe they are interesting. In a performance piece in Stockholm last year, Tracey Emin could be peeped at through a spylife as, stripped naked, she painted a portrait of herself being mounted from behind. But what is the difference between her and the sad descendants of Warhol's superstars who we can watch at the flip of a TV channel, ripping open their lives for ringmasters such as Oprah Winfrey. There was an originality in Warhol's transformation of taboo images into art. But shock has now become a puerile tool to awaken fagged-out vestiges of public outrage. Sarah Lucas, another notorious bad-girl of Britpop art, has produced lists of obscenities — the colloquial names of sexual parts and sexual practices — emblazoned on 4ft strips of paper.

And if Warhol propounded a superficiality in art, it was one touched with irony and dead-pan wit. I went to the opening of a show by the artist Gary Hume, a Turner Prize contender, at the Saatchi Gallery last month, but found in the bland surfaces of household paint only a null vanity, unrelieved by assurances that two three-leaf clovers were a "decorative emblem", representing "the moment of conception and of artistic inspiration". The only artist present, as far as I could tell, was Charles Saatchi himself. He had created meaning out of meaningless paintings by placing them in the context of a gallery and a circle of glitzy but glibbie guests.

This is not necessarily to say that conceptual art is always bad or that there should be a return to the more traditional techniques. The world is equally plagued by the mediocrity of stolid convention. There is room for diversion and expansion of ideas. Artists like Damien Hirst touch a nerve with their powerful images. Gilbert and George play, to subtle effect, with Warholian ideas of multiple reproduction and the artist as artwork. But there is a fine, yet decisive line between them, and someone like Angus Fairhurst, flopping around in a monkey suit in front of a video camera.

We live now in a Warholian world.

Motor mouth

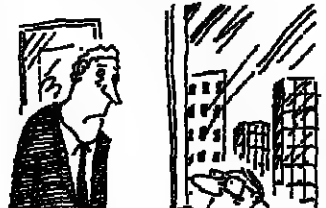
MODESTY is the unlikely sentiment on display from Alan Clark, the lascivious Tory candidate for Kensington and Chelsea.

Writing about his Bentley Continental S, numberplate AC 1800, for the *Backfire* column in this month's *Classic Cars*, the old bloodhound says: "I deliberately understate the appearance of my own car having had the shiny wheels stoved matt black... Unlike (I assume) most owners I don't want other road users to think 'look at that rich git in his Bentley' — not until it's too late, anyway."

This "vaguely menacing but unflashy" black wheel-rim look "gives good protection against it getting keyed by a roaming Class-War activist".

instruments and tells of how his windscreen surround just popped out: "I've never heard of this happening to a 20-year-old Capri." He rounds off his tirade by asking some big questions of Bentley: "Who's in charge? Above all, who's responsible for inspection?"

Scratching away to try to cash in on the election is David Mellor.



the self-satisfied MP for Putney, who has been hawking around a synopsis for a book. His proposal is a comparative study of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. At least one major publisher has turned up its nose.

Organ grinder

SNEAKY pre-election tactics are under way in the Tory camp if we are to believe Labour's account of a radio phone-in on BBC Radio Gloucestershire. Diana Organ, Labour's candidate for the Forest of Dean, was in full cry expounding party policy on air the other day when the monotony was relieved by a call from a listener, styling himself Paul from Mitcheldean. Mitcheldean Paul turned out to be Paul Marland, the local Tory MP, and Ms Organ has taken his intervention in poor humour.



Stringer, a Welshman. Stringer, who made his name in America with CBS, rising to be president of the network, is said to have been talking to Channel 4 in the past few days.

Now in charge of an interactive company called Tele-TV, he is one of the key fundraisers for new Labour in New York. Channel 4 may appeal to him, if remarks he made in 1995 are anything to go by. "After years of living with the rat-

Centre in London will stage plays put on by theatre critics having signed up our own Jeremy Kingston. Michael Billington of *The Guardian*, James Christopher of *The Express* and Nicholas de Jongh of *London's Evening Standard*.

A front-row seat in the stalls for *The Critics — Up for Review* has been reserved for Michael Bogdanov, director, who takes a dim view of critics. "If you have sweated blood for a performance," he said recently, "only to find it dismissed contemptuously as 'incompetent', you may be forgiven for wanting to revive the garrote."

Disarm news for Jonathan Hill, the Prime Minister's former political secretary. He hasn't even made the last 15 in the contest to replace Sir George Gordiner as the Tory candidate in Reigate. Sir George, however, need not worry about being overshadowed by his replacement. The best of the rest



Princess Victoria of Sweden.

queen, she has been ordered back to Scandinavia to run her country. Under the Swedish constitution, the princess must stand in for King



LONG MARCHER

Deng's unequal legacy to modern China

Deng Xiaoping's long career, stretching back to his political apprenticeship to Zhou Enlai as a casual worker at the Renault Billancourt factory and his joining of the Communist Party 73 years ago, is a mirror held up to the turbulent history of China's Communist revolution. To the Chinese, and certainly to Mao Zedong, he was a talented apparition and a survivor, but hardly an obvious contender for the modern equivalent of the Mandate of Heaven that he managed by stealth and perseverance to claim. To Western eyes, this tiny, brusque man of formidable guile and willpower was a mass of contradictions.

Ever ruthless in the Party's defence, he was also several times, most notably in the Cultural Revolution, the victim of the arbitrary and cruel system of centralised dictatorship that he helped to forge. Zealous after 1949 in the enforced collectivisation of the peasantry and in the purges, first of landlords and then of intellectuals, which physically and morally impoverished China, he was to become after 1978 the man who successfully exhorted Chinese that "to be rich is glorious". Inventive and pragmatic in his drive for a prosperous China under the slogan of "four modernisations", he persecuted without hesitation or mercy all those who argued that China must also embrace the "fifth modernisation", democratic reform and accountable government. He was the architect of China's "opening up" to the outside world; but he was unshakably convinced that foreign influences were a source of "spiritual pollution".

The man born with the name Deng Xihou to a minor local landowner in Sichuan bent like a reed before the gales of political fashion. Yet as a Communist, he was remarkably consistent. Everything that he did had the Party in mind. That was why he lauded the "wall of steel" with which the People's Liberation Army crushed the demonstrators of Tiananmen. But that was also why he cast orthodox socialist ideology to the winds, famously telling Chinese people that it didn't matter whether the cat was black or white so long as it caught mice. The point for Deng was that the Chinese Communist Party would not long survive the collapse of Communism in the West

unless ordinary Chinese came to equate it with rising wealth. His reward is that to the Chinese who mourn his death today, he came at the end to stand — even after the horrors of Tiananmen and although the Party has become synonymous with corruption in high places — for a period of unaccustomed and deeply valued stability.

That, even more than the respect still accorded to the few remaining veterans of Mao's legendary Long March, accounts for his continued hold on the imagination of his countrymen. In many men, the long years which Deng Xiaoping spent in death's anteroom would make his final step over the threshold an event of minor significance. China's "paramount leader" officially retired in 1990, was already unable to make a speech when he was last seen in public three years ago and slipped rapidly thereafter into semi-comatose senility. The successors whose rivalry for supreme power will now intensify will be well pleased if the world's reaction is similar to that of Dorothy Parker when told of Calvin Coolidge's death — to shrug and say "how could they tell?" They will be even more pleased if foreign governments and investors take for granted Chinese assurances that a seamlessly smooth succession is already established fact. But they will be pleased precisely because the reality is otherwise.

China now enters on a period of uncertainty. That is for two reasons. The first is China operates through complicated and highly personalised networks of *guanxi*, or connections, between different power bases. None of the present "collective" leadership, whether it be the "core" leader, President Jiang Zemin, the grey Soviet-trained Prime Minister, Li Peng, or the reforming technocrats grouped around Qiao Guh, has the key to them all — let alone the authority over the armed forces that Deng enjoyed. The second is that Deng's revolution is changing China in ways that he never intended. Open windows "let in flies": capitalism, even on "the Chinese model", is eroding the Party's monopoly on power because it requires shared information and devolved decision-making. While he lived, these contradictions could, with difficulty, be masked. From now on, they will be harder and harder to evade.

A PROPER SCEPTICISM

Rifkind is right to show his hostility to EMU

Try as ministers will, the carefully mixed cement sealing last month's Cabinet compromise on monetary union keeps cracking. The chinks are swiftly repaired, but not before exploring eyes have peered into the Cabinet Room through the slit briefly opened in the wall. What the public wants to know is whether the Government's studiously pragmatic formal position, which is that Britain will not join an EMU based on fudged convergence criteria and does not see how that could be otherwise on the 1999 timetable, masks hardening opposition in the Cabinet to the single currency on grounds of principle. What Labour hankers to know, in addition, is whether a Cabinet split on EMU this side of the election would enable it to shift the spotlight away from its own ambiguous version, or more accurately, versions, of "wait and see".

The result, as every minister knows, is that their every word on this explosive issue attracts more scrutiny than entire speeches on other matters of policy. Yesterday morning on the *Today* programme, Malcolm Rifkind was deflected from his preferred theme, his speech in Bonn last night challenging Germany to explain how its ambitions for political union stop short of creating "a European state" that few European citizens want, back onto this hazardous EMU territory.

The Foreign Secretary repeated that there were "powerful arguments against a single currency" and that Britain had "no commitment in principle" to join. These arguments go back to Britain's Maastricht opt-out and are compatible with the Cabinet policy that Britain will "negotiate and then decide". But, teased that the Government was "neutral", he retorted that although very careful

thought was needed before rolling it out completely, "on balance, we are hostile to a single currency".

In the calculation of Britain's interest which both parties say will be the ultimate test, there is a world of difference between the "yes, if" to which Labour has been leaning and "no, unless" that hostility implies. Even so, Mr Rifkind's frankness does not so much change government policy as make it more voter-friendly. John Major's immediate response was to reinforce the message by pointing out that Britain had sterling, that the burden of proof was on supporters of EMU to demonstrate that a change would be beneficial and that "we are not so persuaded at the moment". Had Kenneth Clarke not rushed, in defiance of accepted etiquette among Cabinet colleagues, to declare Mr Rifkind's remark a "slip of the tongue under pressure", it would have been a good day for the Government.

By fanning the flames in this way, as he has repeatedly done whenever EMU is in contention, the Chancellor does neither himself nor his party any favours. He gives Labour chances to play its best card, Tory divisions; and where his own position is concerned he reveals the nervousness and unsure touch of a man on the defensive. This is the more extraordinary in view of the strong doubts he now has, expressed in his interview with *The Times* on page 29, about the wisdom of going ahead with EMU before the countries that want to join have made sufficient progress with structural economic and labour reforms. On Europe's future, the Tories now have compelling arguments. Mr Rifkind rightly wants to take them to the heart of Europe. Mr Clarke's place is at his shoulder, not behind his back.

RAIDERS OF THE LOST LEGENDS

If Atlantis exists, we shall have to invent another imaginary city

Today's latest map of the mind locates Atlantis in Bolivia. Jim Allen, a former cartographic draughtsman and aerial intelligence interpreter for the RAF, says so, at length, in a book supported by photographs, charts and other toys of his trade.

Now an expert at making mountains out of microdots commands attention with such topographical identification. It is odd that the island suddenly swallowed up by the sea should re-emerge as a landlocked state. Especially one that has more of its land above sea-level than anywhere except Nepal. But Mr Allen has an answer for that. Atlantis lay in a plain surrounded by great mountains and canals. The Bolivian altiplano, with its volcano under Lake Poopó, could explain both legendary inundation and modern geography.

Since Plato first spun the tale in the *Timaeus*, category-confused romantics have been looking for the lost Atlantis. And their evidence has been assembled with as much emphasis as Mr Allen's. But until today, the best candidate was Thera. The volcanic eruption that blew Thera out of prehistory has been held responsible for other such cata-

strophe myths as Noah's Ark, the parting of the Red Sea to let the Israelites across before drowning the Egyptians, and the inundation of the Minoans.

But Atlantis was foundation and morality myth before guidebook. And the search for heroic lands of lost content, from Camelot to Shangri La, has been as productive as aerial photography. The modern passion for fantasy in films and books shows that the imagination has its own cartography, older and older than physical topography.

As Stephen Hawking and his peers prove, scientists are more prone to romance than ordinary mortals as soon as they step outside the black holes of their specialities. For Michael Parady first saw the connection between electricity and magnetism, and for that ended up with his face on the back of the £20 note as an English worthy. But Parady was also a Sandemanian, holding incredible opinions of the unscientific world. If they really discover Atlantis in Bolivia, this may be a great day for the prehistorians and proto-archaeologists. But the rest of us will just have to invent another city of the mind. One that we can seek but never find.

Self-interest and the arms trade

From Air Vice-Marshal John Downey (retd)

Sir, On moral grounds the Bishops of Coventry, Durham and Oxford are clearly right to call for control over the arms trade (letter, February 15). But I believe one could support them by appealing to enlightened self-interest on strategic grounds.

The arms trade is most profitable to middlemen who can buy fully developed surplus weapons off the shelf, which bear no direct research, development or production costs. It is governments that bear all the high-tech R&D costs, and the desire to offset these is the principal motive behind direct governmental arms trading.

The problem is compounded by the fragmentation of Western arms production. In 1984 Michael Heseltine, then Secretary of State for Defence, pointed out that within Nato there were 11 firms in seven countries working on anti-tank weapons; 18 firms in seven countries making ground-to-air weapons; eight firms in six countries making air-to-air weapons; 16 firms in seven countries working on air-to-ground weapons and ten firms in seven countries working on ship-to-ship weapons.

Since then commercial regrouping and jointly-funded projects have reduced fragmentation, but the burdens are still formidable. All West European nations, and to some extent even the US, face R&D costs out of proportion to the production runs for their own national forces. Sales abroad are therefore a necessity rather than simply a bonus. In fact there is rarely if ever a net profit, merely an alleviation of the huge cost of nation-based defence procurement.

A further disadvantage is, of course, the lack of standardisation of equipment in Nato, which is likely to be aggravated by its proposed eastwards expansion (letters, February 17); and the much sought-after European security system will heighten the need for more cost-effective defence and more integrated arms procurement.

These prospects, together with moves in Europe towards greater integration of foreign and defence policies, will create opportunities which we must not miss to agree rules for the arms trade.

Yours faithfully,
J. C. T. DOWNEY,
Windmill House, Bosham, Sussex,
February 16.

Sex education

From the Chair of the Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health

Sir, Critics of the report on teenage sex by the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, which advocates earlier sex education and sensitive sexual health services, suggest that these will lead to an increase in promiscuity ("Birth control advice urged at age of 11", February 15).

This belief is repeatedly contradicted by evidence and research, including that of the World Health Organisation. In fact, in countries such as Sweden and The Netherlands which offer consistent early sex education — at primary school years — young people are seen to delay first sexual activity.

The report further points to the vital importance of educational and health services — teachers, GPs and school nurses — working closely together to ensure young people are supported in developing the confidence to make decisions about their sexual health and to resist pressure to be sexually active. Only with such a collaborative approach will we be able to tackle our unenviable record of holding the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe.

Yours faithfully,
JO ADAMS, Chair,
Society for the Advancement
of Sexual Health,
PO Box 17,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire,
February 17.

TV "stings"

From the Director of Programmes, Channel 4 Television

Sir, John Stomborh's partial interpretation of the way the programme code of the Independent Television Commission is used to police secret filming is seriously misleading (letters, February 11).

The code says secret filming "is acceptable only when it is clear that the material so acquired is essential to establish the credibility and authority of a story, and where the story itself is equally clearly of important public interest".

The code also states that, as senior programme executive at Channel 4, all applications for such filming have to be submitted to me in writing before the filming is carried out (wherever practicable) and again before it is transmitted. These written requests are reviewed regularly by the ITC.

Channel 4 does not give permission lightly for secret filming, and we certainly do not sanction "fishing expeditions". But it is sometimes necessary to use secret filming in order to corroborate important stories of public interest, such as the Sotheby's scandal.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN WILLIS,
Director of Programmes,
Channel Four Television,
124 Horseferry Road, SW1,
February 12.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

'Gay genes' and selective abortion

From Mr Peter Tatchell

Sir, I am surprised that an esteemed scientist like Dr James Watson should give any credibility, however qualified, to the flawed theory which claims a genetic causation of homosexuality (report, February 17).

According to gay gene theory, genetic factors are responsible for sexual orientation, with our genetic inheritance programming us to desire one sex rather than the other.

If heterosexuality and homosexuality are, indeed, mutually exclusive, unchangeable and genetically determined as this theory suggests, how do we explain bisexuality or people who suddenly in midlife, switch from heterosexuality to homosexuality (or vice versa)? We can't.

It is, of course, possible that genetic factors might predispose individuals towards a particular sexuality. However, a predisposition is not the same as a causation. Most studies indicate that genetic influences are of secondary significance compared to social mores and expectations.

If homosexuality was primarily explainable in genetic terms, we would expect it to appear in the same proportions and forms in all cultures and all epochs.

As the anthropologists Clefian Ford and Frank Beach demonstrated in *Patterns of Sexual Behaviour* (1968), far from being cross-culturally stable, both the incidence and expressions of

same-sex desire vary vastly between different societies.

Yours sincerely,
PETER TACHELL,
45 Arrol House,
Rockingham Street, SE1.

From Mr Mark Mullen

Sir, Quentin Crisp seems to equate homosexuality with effeminacy and frivolity. Though he may have wished to be "a princess" and felt his "body was not what he wanted it to be", this surely is a reflection of his personality, rather than his sexuality.

Commentators persistently fail to recognise homosexuality for what it is, a small part of an individual's life. It does not colour everything one does, or account for the camp and ridiculous behaviour which has its roots in the insalubrious sub-culture developed before legalisation. Nor does it imply that a homosexual wishes to be anything other than male.

Any genetically based selective abortion programme would deprive the world of many hard-working, sober-minded individuals who are perfectly satisfied with their existence and their sexuality. Crisp should not tar us all with his own brush.

Yours faithfully,
MARK R. MULLEN,
Van Mildert College,
University of Durham,
February 17.

Teaching standards under review

From the Reverend Ian Paul

Sir, We read this morning of the latest development in the Government's education policy — yet another way to punish teachers (leading article and report, "Teachers face sack if their pupils fail").

It is commonly believed that the way you treat people shapes the way they behave. I wonder what effect it is having on children at school for their teachers to be living in an atmosphere of constant criticism from their political masters.

It is not time that the Government led by example and started finding good to praise, rather than finding faults to criticise? We would expect no less from any teacher.

Yours faithfully,
IAN PAUL,
44 Kingston Road, Poole, Dorset,
February 12.

From Dr M. F. Hopkinson

Sir, Reading Viscount Caldecote's letter advocating a chartered professional teachers' institution (February 11) against a background of yet another initiative by Gillian Shephard to raise standards in education, caused me to reflect that all attempts to "charter" teachers so as to establish internally monitored professional standards have failed because of the reluctance of governments to allow professional autonomy.

As long as the State (through the Department for Education and Employment, the Teacher Training Agency or whatever body) controls and manipulates teacher-training numbers in line with political agendas there is little chance of a true, independent profession being allowed to develop in this country.

The level of knowledge required by the curriculum rises continually: my daughter studies for her geography GCSE work which only recently I was teaching to my undergraduate students and which I only learnt at post-

graduate level. The ability of some, if not all, children to handle such a curriculum surely implies rising rather than falling standards of education.

Yours faithfully,
M. F. HOPKINSON,
204 Stockton Lane, York,
February 12.

From Mr Tim Wheatley

Sir, Viscount Caldecote called for "a focus for excellence both in maintaining high standards of training and of professional conduct in its widest sense". We agree with him that if initiatives to raise the standards of the teaching profession are to have any chance of success they must involve the profession itself.

As the current chartered body for the teaching profession, the College of Preceptors is actively seeking ways in which Viscount Caldecote's ideas can be put into practice. It also supports the very relevant proposals which have long been made from within education for a General Teaching Council for England and Wales, and endorses the current Private Members' Bill promoted by Sir Malcolm Thornton, MP, on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
TIM WHEATLEY
(Chief Executive Officer),
College of Preceptors,
Coppice Row,
Theydon Bois, Epping, Essex,
February 12.

From Dr Julia Matthews

Sir, Teaching success is hard to measure with pupils who have special educational needs or are taken on after suspension from other schools. Will any school admit them, or are we heading for a population of pupil refuseniks?

Yours etc,
JULIA MATTHEWS
50 Sydney Road, Bexleyheath, Kent,
February 12.

Science and the arts

From Mr K. R. Williams

Sir, The chasm between public recognition given to artists and scientists aptly described by Melvyn Bragg (article, February 10; letters, February 15) has only deepened during the 20th century. The Friday evening discourses at the Royal Institution of Great Britain at which eminent scientists describe their work to a general audience began early in the 19th century and rapidly became so popular that the traffic congestion outside in Albemarle Street was severe enough for the authorities to have to make it London's first one-way thoroughfare.

By the turn of the century outstanding members of society including members of the government regularly attended on these occasions. Sadly a well-rounded person with an understanding of both arts and science is no longer the norm. Surely some attempt to remedy this deficiency could be made by televising these discourses, which continue to this day?

Yours faithfully,
KEITH R. WILLIAMS,
University of Cambridge,
Department of Material Science
and Metallurgy,
Pembroke Street, Cambridge,
February 17.

From Mr R. W. Provan

Sir, The surname Blue, although not exactly common, is by no means unknown in this part of Scotland, there being 23 listed in the Clyde Coast telephone directory. There are, however, 248 Greens.

Considering the significance of these two colours in this part of the world, both on and off the football park, I will leave your readers to draw their own conclusions.

I was also surprised to find that, despite the Clyde's historic political reputation, there was not a single "Red".

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT W. PROVAN,
37 Morrishill Drive,
Beith, North Ayrshire,
February 10.

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Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

Bishop's choice of the Koran for Lent

From the Reverend Dr Alan C. Clifford

Sir, The decision by the Right Reverend Alan Smithson, Bishop of Jarrow, to suspend his Lenten Bible reading in favour of the Koran (report, February 14) is outrageous. Would Muslims tolerate the reading of the Bible instead of the Koran during Ramadan?

While the study of other faiths is useful in discouraging prejudice and hatred, no amount of scholarship can place the Koran in the same category as the Christian scriptures. The Bible contains all that is necessary for Western civilisation to rediscover its soul.

A religion which is persecuting Christians in the Sudan and elsewhere, which demands tolerant treatment in the Western world while itself stipulating barbaric penalties for criminals, has little or nothing to teach those who value the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN C. CLIFFORD
(Pastor, Norwich Reformed Church),
7 Woodside Park,
Aldershot, Hants,
February 14.

From Mr Karim Chowdhury

Sir, I congratulate the Bishop of Jarrow on taking up reading the Koran. I am sure he will find a better understanding of the teachings of Christ as the Koran relates many stories to the life of Jesus and his mother Mary (peace and blessing be upon them both).

He will also find that it provides a study of comparative religion: all aspects of religion, from polytheism to monotheism and the tenets of Judaism, Christianity and other faiths are discussed within the text.

However, I am surprised that he had never read the Koran before, given his position within the Church and the community, and given the influence and impact on the world from a faith that probably has the largest number of practising members.

I would strongly recommend the Church of England to take up study of the Koran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him), as they may learn something to reduce the growing tide of crime, teenage pregnancies and drug abuse within this country.

This might stop so many people leaving the Church of England.

Yours sincerely,
KARIM CHOWDHURY,
64 Warren Street, W1,
February 15.

From the Reverend Ian Russell

Sir, I am encouraged by the Bishop of Jarrow's open-mindedness in his search for great spiritual truths and insights. I believe that reading the Koran is likely to be a beautiful experience.

By contrast the Reverend George Curry's comment — "Unfortunately we are living in a generation in which church leaders are giving the impression that all religions lead to God" — saddens me. It makes me wonder where these religions lead if not to God. I dislike the assumption that Christianity (with its many branches and internal disagreements) is the sole custodian of the soul.

My ears respond to the music of Monteverdi; my eyes to the medium of watercolour and to the style of the impressionists. But it does not make opera, oil on canvas or Cubism invalid. It is what makes my heart sing which is important for me; but what makes another's heart sing is also important to me — for their sake.

Yours sincerely,
IAN RUSSELL
(Pastor, New Jerusalem Church,
Manchester),
5 Quayside Close,
Worsley, Manchester,
February 14.

From Mr A. J. Bradley

Sir, "If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?" (1 Corinthians xiv, 8). Is it any wonder that the Church of England is facing a membership crisis when one of its leaders takes the bizarre decision to substitute the Koran for the Bible during Lent? Such action is certainly not the trumpet giving the clear call that a confused world is looking for, and so it will look elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,
A. J. BRADLEY,
14 Greenhalgh Moss Lane,
Tontinning,
Bury, Lancashire,
February 14.

Pain and passion

From Mr Claus von Bulow

Sir, Quentin Crisp (letter, February 15) wrote with customary scholarship about Mrs Beeton's passionate love for her husband Samuel, and his (Samuel's) contributions to the literature of discipline. Your caption to his letter was, understandably, "Beeton beaten".

One is reminded of the passion felt for the late Doris Caslerose by that curious duo, Cecil Beaton and Sir Alfred Beit, the poor lady being "beaten by Beaton and bitten by Beit".

Yours sincerely,
CLAUS VON BULOW,
109 Onslow Square, SW7,
February 19.

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OBITUARY

DENG XIAOPING

Deng Xiaoping, China's paramount leader, died yesterday aged 92. He was born in Sichuan province on August 22, 1904.

He was less than five feet tall, shorter than Napoleon and not in the heroic cast of Mao Zedong. Yet Deng Xiaoping's unchallenged leadership of China after 1978 may leave a deeper mark than Mao's on a population representing a fifth of mankind. Deng was 74 before his chance came to propel China in a new and more promising direction. Yet he presided over the most ambitious and successful market and free enterprise reforms ever undertaken in a socialist country. He effectively saved the Chinese Communist Party from disintegration in the late 1970s when it faced a crisis of legitimacy in the wake of Mao's disastrous Cultural Revolution. And his reforms later proved robust enough to survive the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union. The turnaround was a spectacular political sea change from China's radical and isolationist stance during the time of Mao. Deng opened the door to Western visitors, technology and investment and promoted a mixed economy with considerable scope for market forces to develop. He attempted to heal and stabilise China, with the aim of putting it back on the course of economic progress from which it had been derailed by Mao's "Great Leap Forward" experiment of 1958 and the Cultural Revolution that began in 1966. But Deng's name is also stained with the blood shed at Tiananmen Square in June 1989, when he was seen as responsible for unleashing soldiers on unarmed students demonstrating for democracy at a cost perhaps of up to a thousand civilian lives. Traumatized by his own experiences during the Cultural Revolution, what he feared above all else was chaos. The students at Tiananmen may have brought back memories of those terrible years, but history will judge him harshly for allowing such a clumsy and brutal response to peaceful demonstrators. The leadership was in some confusion at that time, but in a recently-published collection of his speeches Deng discussed the military assault on Tiananmen saying, "fortunately I was around to deal with the situation."

Deng was born Deng Ziansheng (he adopted the name Xiaoping on joining the revolutionary movement) in 1904 in Paifang in the traditionally rebellious province of Sichuan. He was the eldest son of a smallholding landowner. Leaving home at 16, he never returned, going to France as a worker-student in 1920 and joining in 1924 the European branch of the Chinese Communist Party.

In 1926, after some months in Moscow, Deng returned to China eventually joining a guerrilla group in Guangxi province. This merged with the larger force associated with Mao. Deng built up extensive contacts as a political commissar during the Long March of 1934-36.

He was promoted to the party central committee at the seventh congress in 1945, and then fought in the civil war as political commissar in what became the Second Field Army. He played a leading role in the crucial battle of Huai-Hai before going on to lead armies against the Nationalists' last strongholds in the Southwest. Early in Mao's new People's Republic, Deng became a vice-premier and finance minister in Zhou Enlai's cabinet, and in 1955 he was made party secretary general. The eighth party congress of 1956 saw him elevated to the Politburo standing committee.

Deng gained a reputation for toughness while carrying out the land reform programme in the 1950s, egging on peasants into killing landlords. But it was in Sino-Soviet affairs that he first became widely known abroad. He assisted Zhou's negotiations with Khrushchev in 1954 and visited Moscow in 1956. Mao later chose Deng to attend the 20th Soviet Congress in Moscow in 1956 where Stalin was denounced. In 1957 he accompanied Mao to Moscow to argue with the Russians. Finally, in 1962 Deng led the last Chinese delegation to Moscow to see the dispute escalate into a complete break. The Russians found him a tough, unyielding opponent.

By 1956 Deng had become exasperated by Mao's wayward economic policies. In the rivalry that developed between Liu and Mao, Deng's sympathies were with Liu. This was remembered ten years later

when Deng and Liu were expelled from office in the Cultural Revolution. Mao forced Deng in the late 1960s to work as a fitter in a tractor factory in Jiangxi province. Deng turned off his hearing aid during one meeting in which he was being criticised.

Not until April 1973 did he reappear in public life, at the urging of Zhou Enlai. Zhou needed Deng's drive to restore an economy badly damaged and a society utterly dispirited. Mao needed Deng's contacts in army circles to restore party authority over powerful regional commanders.

Gradually Deng climbed back to office as vice-premier and member of the central committee. But by 1974 the battle between the antagonists of the Cultural Revolution became an acute struggle for power. In 1975 fate once again brought him down. In September Premier Zhou's cancer worsened and he could no longer effectively defend Deng. After Zhou's death Mao named the little-known Hua Guofeng to succeed him. When a demonstration in Beijing in April 1976, ostensibly in Zhou's memory, turned into a massive spontaneous show of disapproval for the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, Deng was accused of being behind it. On Mao's authority he was stripped of all his posts.

Deng had to wait for almost a year after Mao's death before being readmitted for the second time to the central committee and made a vice-premier. His path was made easier when Hua Guofeng's grandiose but unrealistic economic plans led in 1978 to unusable imports, excessive costs and hopeless waste. By December 1978 Deng was able to win a majority on the Politburo and from then on appeared as the maker of China's policy. But opposition to Deng was still considerable. It derived from the many millions of cadres all over the country promoted during the Cultural Revolution.

In addition to more effective economic modernisation, a return to constitutional propriety and party discipline was high on Deng's agenda. Although he permitted the family members of senior



colleagues to make corrupt fortunes, he gained respect by allowing action to be taken against his own son for alleged corruption. He also cut back the army's numbers sharply, modernising it and trying to make it more professional. The economic reforms, first introduced in the countryside and leading to the effective abolition of Mao's people's communes, brought early results in terms of bigger harvests. The mood at the 12th party congress in 1982 was more confident, and Deng was able to put reforms into more critical posts. But he could not persuade a small number of the old guard, especially the 85-year-old Ye Jianying, who had strong backing within the army, and who had misgivings about Deng's economic reforms as

well as his personality, to retire.

Doubts about the reforms came to a head in 1988, when the spectre of inflation once more loomed over China. Deng was not able to knock heads together in the leadership to achieve a genuine consensus, and so the party high command was left divided. When the choice had to be made whether to further the reforms or to go slow and safeguard party unity, Deng chose what at the time must have seemed the easier road, aligning himself with his blinkered fellow-oligarchs. As he tried to withdraw from public life in the late 1980s his balancing act became increasingly difficult. He achieved his summit with Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989, only to have it hijacked, in publicity terms, by students calling for the *glasnost* he had consistently refused to permit.

One of Deng's dearest ambitions was to recover China's "lost" territories. But the apparent liberalism of Presidents Nixon and Carter in recognising China was followed by President Reagan's attachment to Taiwan. Deng nevertheless rejected in winning from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1984 an agreement for the return of sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997.

Deng introduced the phrase "One Country, Two Systems" to depict both Hong Kong's envisaged role in China after 1997 and a more tolerant attitude towards Taiwan. He described the Basic Law for Hong Kong as an "historic event, not just for the present and for China but for all mankind." But he did not live to fulfil his dream of visiting Hong Kong after the 1997 retrocession, and saw China involved in bitter arguments with Britain over Governor Chris Patten's proposals for democratic reforms, which Deng steadfastly opposed.

He gave up his last formal post as chairman of the state Central Military Commission in late 1989, after which he appeared less and less in public. He continued, however, to exert influence. In January 1991 he sent a message to the party plenum urging the central committee to stop arguing about whether reforms

were socialist or capitalist and to get on with improving the economy. In January 1992, scotching any suspicion that his influence was waning, he inspected Shenzhen, the show-piece zone of capitalist-style reforms bordering Hong Kong, and used the occasion to re-affirm China's promise to maintain Hong Kong's capitalist system for a hundred years. Meanwhile the Chinese economy entered another period of boom with double digit growth recorded for both 1992 and 1993.

In October 1992 Deng made a 20-minute appearance after the end of the 14th party congress which endorsed his policies of economic pragmatism by labelling them, in a phrase he was credited with coining (to avoid conflict with socialist orthodoxy), "socialism with Chinese characteristics". But his hopes of leaving behind him a united group of rational and vigorous leaders, able to pursue the various reforms he had initiated, were not convincingly realised.

His first choice as secretary general, Hu Yaobang, had been praised out of his position because of widespread doubts about his impetuosity and immaturity and because he was blamed for excessive tolerance of student demonstrations.

Zhao Ziyang, who was then promoted in his place, was temperamentally more fitted to the prime minister's post. But his support for fast-track economic reform (as an alternative to bureaucratic fiscal retrenchment) brought him into conflict with the more conservative prime minister Li Peng. Deng held back from breaking the political stalemate until Tiananmen brought matters to a head. In June 1989 Deng selected the surviving leader capable of curing China's malaise.

He had the political skills, backed by unrivalled civilian and military contacts and experience. Twice thrown out by Mao, he had twice recovered. And in Deng's final years some of the same fears of disorder, of provincial "economic warlords" increasingly defying a weakened centre, were being expressed.

made Deng's rule a watershed in Chinese history was his persistence in continuing China's opening to the outside world even under domestic criticism. His leadership achieved a decisive break with the arbitrary political terror and extremism of Mao, though marred by much-publicised violations of the human rights of political dissidents. Deng was never a liberal.

Although he promoted lieutenants more liberal than himself to high posts, he himself stoutly defended the Communist Party's monopoly of power. His death brings to the surface deep uncertainties about China's political future and how the army, party and the new class of entrepreneurs will now share power.

Some hoped that his economic reforms would be accompanied by political freedoms. But Deng was opposed to importing Western political culture. He presided over periodic campaigns against spiritual pollution and bourgeois liberalisation. These often coincided with periods of economic retrenchment when inflation threatened the Chinese economy.

Deng was certainly not a liberal when Mao put him in charge of the Communists' first major crackdown on intellectuals during the Anti-Rightist Campaign in 1957. This purge followed the Hundred Flowers campaign when the party had encouraged the people to make open criticisms. The report Deng made to the Central Committee on the success of that Anti-Rightist campaign was never included in his published collected speeches. Even a convinced liberal would have found it difficult to shift China quickly from the totalitarian habits of more than a millennium. Deng himself remained a practitioner of political authoritarianism and showed his true colours early in his "reign" when he suppressed the Democracy Wall movement in 1978 and imprisoned its leaders.

But then Deng was the manager of political forces which increasingly seemed to pull in opposite directions. He was unwilling to back his reformist protégés at crucial moments when the party elders banded together to put the brakes on reform. The frustration felt by younger reformers burst out into the open at the time of Tiananmen when a frustrated Secretary-General Zhao Ziyang confirmed to Gorbachev the open secret that all important decisions were still being referred to Deng. Deng's fury at this breach of party discipline showed that Zhao had hit a raw nerve.

There was also the vexed question of the intellectuals who for centuries formed China's ruling Mandarin class and are now needed more than ever for the modernisation of the country. Since 1949 many of them have been in conflict with the Communist Party over the issue of how much criticism should be allowed and how far China should open itself to the Western world. After taking a battering under Mao, they were given a freer hand under Deng.

When Mao in his last years asked Deng what he thought would happen after his death, Deng replied that "all hell will break loose", meaning anarchy and a return to warlordism. When Mao died in 1976, Deng was almost the only surviving leader capable of curing China's malaise. He had the political skills, backed by unrivalled civilian and military contacts and experience. Twice thrown out by Mao, he had twice recovered. And in Deng's final years some of the same fears of disorder, of provincial "economic warlords" increasingly defying a weakened centre, were being expressed.

The Chinese Communist Party had Mao to thank for the power it won in 1949 after 20 years of desperate struggle, and Mao's niche in national lore remains secure. But there is no question that millions of Chinese reaped tangible benefits from Deng's agricultural and industrial reforms in the 1980s and 1990s.

Deng's pragmatism was summed up in his famous observation: "What does it matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice?" Mao is supposed to have charged once that, "Deng has never been a Marxist." No ideology, he was a man who wanted to get things done, and was impatient of the inconclusive political campaigns and empty affirmations of Maoism that had done so much to hold China back.

To the outside world, Deng, building on his pioneering appearance at the United Nations in New York in 1974, brought China back into the routine intercourse of international affairs, opening the country to visits by thousands of foreign tourists, scholars, journalists and technicians who had been shut out before.

Time Magazine twice named him Man of the Year. Despite his peasant habit of spitting loudly into a spittoon, and his frequent abrasiveness, Western visitors liked his down-to-earth frankness and sense of fun. Kissinger however called him a "nasty little man".

China had long been aware of the importance of the Western world in the distance, but by 1978 it faced a much nearer group of advanced neighbouring "Confucian" economies (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong) all of which had leapt to success while the "new" China stumbled over political boulders.

When he visited a Nissan factory in Japan in 1978 Deng said: "Today I have learnt what modernisation is like, and he later urged his compatriots to 'learn from the great, diligent, valiant and intelligent Japanese people'."

Deng was also struck by the economic achievements of the overseas Chinese. To Mao the overseas Chinese had been a political tool to spread Chinese-style revolution throughout East and Southeast Asia. Deng saw the damage that this had done to China's image and interests abroad, and focused instead on the overseas Chinese as a source of inspiration for economic reform and as a vast pool of potential investment in China. Realistic scrutiny of these success stories in Asia led Deng to conclude that China's opening to the outside world must be wholehearted. China had to move towards a market economy.

In the end Deng went down as a man of remarkable flexibility who nevertheless lacked the vision or imagination to follow his policies through, with the sombre consequences that were seen in Tiananmen Square.

There is a whole generation in China which will remember him as an architect of economic progress but also as a man responsible for much political illiberalism — authoritarian to the end.

His first wife died; his second deserted him in 1933. Deng is survived by his third wife, Zhao Lin, and five children. One son, Deng Zifang, is an American-trained physicist with the Chinese International Trade and Investment Company in Hong Kong, while the other, Deng Pufang, was crippled in the Cultural Revolution and became a spokesman for charities and the disabled. There are three daughters, Deng Lin (an artist), Deng Nan (a Vice-Minister and Party Central Committee member) and Deng Rong, his secretary and biographer.

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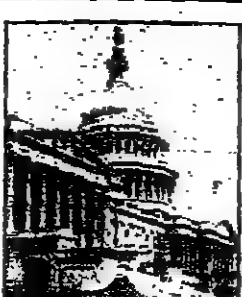
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20 1997

Inquiry sought in fresh BR 'fat cats' row

Eversholt four gain over £40m from sale

BY JONATHAN FRYN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

FOUR directors of the Eversholt train leasing company hit the privatisation jackpot yesterday when they earned £42 million profit from the sale of the firm, sparking a new "fat cats" row over the break up of British Rail.

The four men became instant millionaires when Eversholt, owned by the Government until a £580 million management buyout in December 1995, was acquired by Forward Trust, a subsidiary of Midland Bank, for £726.5 million.

The sale prompted demands from Labour for a Commons inquiry into the "cheap" sale of state assets during rail privatisation that had allowed ten managers to make total profits of £103 million.

The biggest single beneficiary of the sale is its managing director, Andrew Jukes, who will realise around £15.9 million from the £10,000 he

invested in the original management buyout.

His fellow full-time board members, Roger Aylwood, engineering director, and Colin Habgood, finance director, who is leaving the company, will make about £11.6 million each on their £80,000 investments. The fourth director, Peter Harper, a one day a week non-executive chairman, will retire with a £2.9 million return from his £19,800 investment.

The 66 Eversholt employees, a team of engineers, accountants and secretaries, who put in a total of £106,200, have yielded £15.3 million, an average of £230,000 each.

Four directors at the venture capital backers of the buyout, Stephen Curran, chief executive of Candover, Colin Buffin, a director of Candover, Hugh Mumford, managing director of Electra, and Robert Clark, a director of Electra, will share a total of around £600,000 personal profits.

Mr Jukes, 50, a career British Rail and London Transport manager, said all the Eversholt directors had borrowed heavily to finance their investments in the management buyout, taking substantial personal risks. He had taken out an £85,000 bank loan and would have had to sell his six-bedroomed Surrey house if the buyout had failed. Mr Jukes, who drives a Volvo and whose main hobby is gardening, said he had no plans to give up his job or make big lifestyle changes.

He added: "I am not a man who planned to be wealthy. I shall be in work tomorrow, and will continue doing that job."

During the year to end December, Eversholt made pre-tax profits of £122.9 million on turnover of £219.1 million.

Andrew Smith, the Shadow Transport Secretary, said the profits from the sale "shows the continuation of privatisation excesses which the Tories have failed to stop and have failed even to condemn."

The future comes six months after the sale of the Porterbrook rolling stock leasing companies in which 50 former BR managers and staff shared an £80 million profit bonus. Chatterhouse, merchant bank and other city backers of the deal stand to make around £500 million in total from the deal. Sandy Anderson, Porterbrook chairman, made £36 million.



Andrew Jukes: £15.9 million



Roger Aylwood: £11.6 million



Colin Habgood: £11.6 million



Peter Harper: £2.9 million

Money grows faster at Sainsbury's Bank

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

J SAINSBURY, the supermarket group, launched its bank yesterday with an instant access account that offers customers by far the best interest rate in the market.

The account will give 5.75 per cent gross, paid monthly or annually, on any sum from £1. Money Facts said that similar accounts would pay that rate only on balances above £5,000.

Account-holders will get a link cashcard and free phone banking. The bank is also offering a "Christmas Saver" account with 2.5 per cent interest and an annual bonus of 3 per cent, payable in cash or loyalty card points if no funds are withdrawn during the year. Sainsbury's Bank,

which is owned 55 per cent by the supermarket group and 45 per cent by Bank of Scotland, opened for business yesterday at 244 Sainsbury's branches in Scotland, the North of England and the Midlands. It will be rolled out nationally over the next few months.

Launched with the two savings accounts and two credit cards, the bank intends to begin offering mortgages and personal loans in about three months. It will then look at offering current accounts, pensions and Peps.

Holders of the new Sainsbury's Classic and Gold Visa credit cards will be able to collect points on their Reward cards wherever they shop, even in rival supermarkets, but they will get more points for using Sainsbury's.

Card-holders will also get Reward points for transferring the balance from existing credit and store cards to Sainsbury's Bank credit cards. Roger McArthur, chief executive, said that the bank would have start-up costs of £6 million this year. He expects it to go into profit in its third year. It is starting out with £15 million of share capital.

All 11 million Reward Card holders will receive letters inviting them to join the bank. "If we get 250,000 customers in the first 12 months we'd be doing pretty well," Mr McArthur said.

Pennington, page 27

Sales spree helps retail spending to rebound

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

HIGH Street spending rebounded after a dismal December with consumers splashing out on bargains in the January sales. Retail sales increased 0.6 per cent — taking the annual growth rate to 4.6 per cent, its highest level since March 1989.

Economists said the sharp rise, which was well above market expectations, would ensure that the Bank of England will maintain pressure for a base rate rise. Minutes from the January monetary meeting, which were also published yesterday, showed that Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, "strongly recommended" an immediate quarter-point rise and that the Bank felt a half-point rise would be needed "fairly soon".

The data helped the pound to the foreign exchanges, reversing much of Tuesday's heavy losses. The pound closed up more than 2 pence at DM2,730.6, while it climbed just over a cent to \$1.6120. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose 0.8 to 97.6.

The retail sales figures were boosted by strong growth in purchases of clothing and footwear — up 1.5 per cent in January — and sales of household goods, which rose 0.7 per cent. Food sales also rose 0.5 per cent, continuing the upward trend of the past eight months.

Economists pointed out that these sectors had seen heavy discounting in the January sales and tough competition from supermarkets. Simon Briscoe, UK economist at Niko Europe, said the figures showed that consumers were still looking for bargains and that there is no upward pressure on high street prices. The

less volatile three-monthly figures also suggest that high street spending is not accelerating out of control with growth registering 3.9 per cent — in line with the past two quarters. Over December and January retail sales actually fell 0.2 per cent.

Mr George repeated his advice to Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, in the January monetary meeting that interest rates should rise, although his stance was less aggressive than in December. Mr George told the Commons Treasury Select Committee on Monday that there was a "pretty narrow difference" between the Bank's view on rates and Mr Clarke's.

But in the January minutes Mr George warned the Chancellor that if no move on rates was made, the Bank and the market would feel that it was "falling rather clearly behind the game and taking risks with the inflation objective". The Chancellor held his ground at the time, arguing that the rising pound was keeping a lid on inflation, and that a rate increase might cause the pound to appreciate further. He also highlighted the weak levels of manufacturing output, GDP growth and producer price inflation.

Data released yesterday in the US, meanwhile, showed that inflation remains muted, while the trade gap has begun to grow. The consumer price index rose 0.1 per cent, below market expectations, because of a drop in food prices. The trade deficit in December widened to \$10.5 billion, from \$7.9 billion, as exports suffered from the rising dollar.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET

| | | |
|---------------|----------|-----------|
| FTSE 100 | 4357.4 | (+25.1) |
| Yield | 3.21% | (+0.79) |
| Nikkei | 18599.12 | (+128.37) |
| Dow Jones | 7099.77 | (-7.59) |
| S&P Composite | 815.62 | (-0.87) |

US RATE

| | | |
|---------------|----------|------------|
| Federal Funds | 5 1/4% | (5 1/4%) |
| Long Bond | 100 1/2% | (101 1/2%) |
| Yield | 6.57% | (6.55%) |

EURO CURRENCY

| | | |
|-------------------|---------|-----------|
| 3-month Interbank | 6 1/4% | (6 1/4%) |
| Libor long call | 11 3/4% | (11 3/4%) |
| Future (May) | 11 3/4% | (11 3/4%) |

STERLING

| | | |
|----------|--------|----------|
| New York | 1.6120 | (1.6085) |
| London | 1.6120 | (1.6015) |
| DM | 2.7312 | (2.7087) |
| FF | 6.2282 | (6.1455) |
| Sfr | 2.3816 | (2.3800) |
| Yen | 200.04 | (199.74) |
| £ index | 97.6 | (96.8) |

US \$

| | | |
|---------|--------|----------|
| DM | 1.8889 | (1.8888) |
| FF | 6.7330 | (6.6815) |
| Sfr | 1.4870 | (1.4705) |
| Yen | 124.28 | (123.88) |
| £ index | 104.2 | (104.1) |

TOKYO CLOSING

| | |
|------------|--|
| Yen 123.88 | |
|------------|--|

STOCKS

| | | |
|--------------|---------|-----------|
| London close | £346.85 | (£346.35) |
|--------------|---------|-----------|

* denotes midday trading price

Woolwich up

Woolwich, the building society that is floating off on the stock market, may pay out bigger bonuses than expected. Profits last year rose from £333 million to £392 million. Page 26

Medeva rise

Medeva, the pharmaceuticals group, raised pre-tax profits 31 per cent to £103.5 million in the year to December although it charged £65 million against this figure for restructuring. Page 30

Bonham forgoes options

BY JASON NISSE

DEREK BONHAM, who is standing down as chief executive of Hanson to become executive chairman of Energy Group when it demerges this weekend, is leaving behind share options with a negative value of £1 million.

He holds options over 3.2 million shares at subscription prices of between 90p and 128.2p. Yesterday Hanson's shares stood at 89.5p, giving the options a negative value of £1.01 million. Mr Bonham, who runs Energy's US side, is leaving behind options with a negative value of £393,000. At Energy Mr Bonham will be entitled to a bonus of up to two thirds of his £450,000 salary if he takes the bonus in shares, and can join the incentive plan offering a further 25 per cent of his salary after three years. He will also receive £150,000 a year as non-executive chairman of Imperial Group, the tobacco company demerged from Hanson.

Car dealers convicted of falsifying accounts

BY ROBERT MILLER

TWO men who ran a Midlands motor company that crashed with debts of at least £25 million were yesterday found guilty of fraudulent trading at Oxford Crown Court.

After a five-month trial brought by the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) and Leicester fraud squad, John Hayes and Rotherley, Leicester, who founded the Swithland Group in 1975, and David Sharatt, a certified accountant of Thurgestone, Leicester, were convicted and are expected to be sentenced tomorrow. The jury failed to reach a verdict on a third man.

At its peak Swithland, which advertised extensively on Central TV using Samantha Fox, the former page 3 girl, was one of the largest privately owned garage groups in the UK with 21

branches across the Midlands, more than 300 employees and selling up to 600 cars a week.

As the recession began to affect Swithland's business in 1990 the group's finance department prepared two sets of management accounts. One was for internal use and the other was shown to outsiders to falsely present Swithland as a profitable business.

The SFO said that acting on instructions "from above" Swithland employees systematically forged and tampered with records of every description, ranging from sales invoices and rental agreements to stock lists. Hayes and Sharatt used the falsified records to deceive bankers, mislead auditors and decrease their VAT liability.

City warned by Bank of peril in £1m bonus

BY ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE Bank of England is to issue a stark warning on the dangers of paying excessive £1 million-plus City bonuses to traders who could take excessive risks to secure their generous annual payouts.

The unprecedented warning will come early next month in an article by Daniel Davis, a Bank economist, written for the second issue of *Financial Stability Review*, a magazine published by the Bank.

As *The Times* reported earlier this month, the Bank first became concerned about sharply rising bonuses in the Square Mile as far back as the summer of 1995.

With the direct backing of Eddie George, the Governor, the Bank commissioned Margaret Bray, an

economist at the London School of Economics, to study the impact that different kinds of bonus structures have on traders' behaviour and the implications for the risk taken by the employer.

Senior sources at the Bank insist that it, as the statutory watchdog, will not intervene in the growing controversy about excessive City bonus packages.

Nevertheless, next month's article is to serve as a warning to firms that they should supervise more closely the activities of their dealers and futures brokers.

The Bank will also ensure that companies are aware of the risks that they run with their capital should their trading strategies go badly wrong.

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Consider the illustrations below for monthly premiums, on a 20 year, £100,000 level term assurance.

| Male & Female both aged 35 next birthday and non-smokers | Male & Female both aged 45 next birthday and non-smokers |
|--|--|
| Barclays Life | 35.40 |
| Nationwide Life | 37.81 |
| Friends Provident | 41.58 |
| Black Horse Life | 46.38 |
| Scottish Amicable | 48.00 |
| Abbey National Life | 48.60 |
| Scottish Life | 58.51 |
| We can arrange this for | 25.02 |
| Nationwide Life | 83.50 |
| Barclays Life | 86.00 |
| Friends Provident | 88.99 |
| Abbey National Life | 101.40 |
| Black Horse Life | 101.68 |
| Scottish Amicable | 108.00 |
| Scottish Life | 137.40 |
| We can arrange this for | 53.30 |

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Action by Oxford Biomedica

Oxford Biomedica, the gene therapy company, is taking legal action against two investors whom it alleges failed to honour underwriting commitments given at the time of its flotation on the Alternative Investment Market.

The company has accused Stockton Trading, a Bahamas-based dealer and Kaj Kjellquist, a Swedish private investor, of failing to cover £115 million of the £6.15 million it first hoped to raise.

Oxford's shares were placed with institutions at 88p on the understanding that the full amount was underwritten. When the company admitted it had raised only £5 million, the shares opened at 42½p. They now trade at 50½p.

Institute post

Bernard Rickinson, a director of Bodycote International, the engineering company, is leaving to become chief executive of the Institute of Materials.

New pursuits

JKX Oil & Gas, the oil company with interests in the former Soviet Union, has parted with David Robson, a director. He is leaving to pursue private business interests in Eastern Europe and central Asia.

TOURIST RATES

| Rank | Rate | Rank | Rate |
|-------------|--------|-------------|------|
| Australia | 2.19 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Austria | 1.85 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Belgium | 58.57 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Canada | 2.28 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Cyprus | 0.84 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Denmark | 10.88 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Finland | 0.82 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| France | 1.61 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Germany | 2.88 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Greece | 4.45 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Hong Kong | 15.08 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Ireland | 1.20 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Israel | 1.20 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Italy | 8.97 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Japan | 28.25 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Malta | 0.89 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Netherlands | 3.72 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| New Zealand | 2.47 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Norway | 11.36 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Portugal | 282.20 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Spain | 7.25 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Sweden | 243.00 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Switzerland | 12.25 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Switzerland | 2.48 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Switzerland | 302.40 | Switzerland | 1.74 |
| Switzerland | 1.74 | Switzerland | 1.74 |

Rates for short duration travel only as supplied by Sunair. Rates for long duration travel only as supplied by Sunair. Rates for long duration travel only as supplied by Sunair.



Eastern promoter Jack Wilson, right, chairman of London Forfeiting Company, with Statia Papoutas, chief executive, said the acceptance of Russia as a

reasonable credit risk had helped the trade finance group to increase its pre-tax profits 40 per cent to £38 million last year. Mr Wilson said Eastern Europe was a

particularly strong area for LFC. Earnings per share rose from 19.2p to 27.0p, a final dividend of 7.5p, payable April 24, makes a year total of 11.2p.

R-R wins \$96m contract for US fighter jet engine

BY OLIVER AUGUST

ROLLS-ROYCE was awarded a \$96 million contract from the US Government yesterday to develop an engine for the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), the \$170 billion strike aircraft for the next century.

The contract is a significant success for the engine maker in the dogfight to secure work on what is likely to be the only new American fighter programme in the next 20 years. Rolls-Royce said the JSF development contract could result in work even more valuable than the contract for

the Eurofighter engines. A spokesman said: "Several hundred Eurofighters will be built but it is estimated that more than 3,000 JSF aircraft could be needed by 2030."

The JSF engine programme would create thousands of jobs for technicians and engineers if the Rolls-Royce engine design was chosen by the US Government.

Currently, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, the main contractors developing the JSF, are using Pratt & Whitney engines for their prototypes.

But Rolls-Royce is confident that its alternative engine stands a reasonable chance of displacing the Pratt & Whitney design.

Rolls-Royce is already co-operating with Boeing and Lockheed on the vertical lift-off capability of the JSF. The aircraft will be able to take off like a helicopter, similar to the Harrier jump jet that also uses Rolls-Royce technology.

The spokesman said: "The new contract means that we now also have an involvement in the main engine work,

rather than just being a component supplier on the lift element."

Rolls-Royce will be co-operating with GE Aircraft Engines of the US and Allison, the American engine company owned by Rolls-Royce. The agreement to work together was struck last year and the JSF engine development programme will run for four years, with a follow-on option of another three years.

British Aerospace, the other large British aerospace company involved in the development of jump jets, is still looking to join Boeing or Lockheed after its own JSF bid was rejected by the US Government last year.

Bae is under no immediate pressure to make a decision on which bid to join. While Boeing and Lockheed are both courting Bae, the group is said to be more likely to choose Boeing in the wake of its merger with McDonnell Douglas, a former Bae partner on the Harrier and the Hawk training aircraft.

Pension fund criticises Apple

CALPERS, the \$108 billion Californian state pension fund, has targeted two of the US's best-known companies, Apple Computers and Reebok, as being among America's top ten financial underperformers (Jason Nisae writes).

The annual list is used by CALPERS as the basis for

shareholder activism. CALPERS has already moved against Apple, recently leading an attempt to oust part of the computer group's board.

CALPERS has \$3 billion invested in the UK, but has yet to spotlight a UK company. Research shows that firms targeted by CALPERS outperform

the Standard & Poor's 500 by an average of 66 per cent.

CALPERS says Apple has lost market share in personal computers through management's lack of experience, and that the Reebok shoe company's chiefs are not accountable enough.

Tempos, page 28

Market rise may boost Woolwich payouts

BY ANNE ASHWORTH

WOOLWICH savers and borrowers may enjoy larger than expected payouts when the society makes its stock market debut in early July. The rise in the stock market has boosted the estimated value of the aspiring bank to more than £3.4 billion, 8 per cent higher than the estimate made last December.

This could mean that the basic distribution of 450 free shares to be given to the 2.57 million qualifying Woolwich customers will be worth more than £900, against the earlier estimate of £844, based on a mid-point price for the shares. In 1996, its last full year as a mutual before its conversion to a bank, the Woolwich raised its profits 18 per cent to a record £392 million, aided by the recovery in the housing market. John Stewart, chief executive, reported that all divisions made money. Even the Woolwich's estate agency arm, established in 1987, finally made a profit of £2.5 million after years of losses. The profit figure excludes the society's conversion expenses, which were £15 million in 1996. The total cost of the change of status will be some £50 million.

To take full advantage of the increased demand for mortgages, the Woolwich spent £83 million on cashbacks and discount offers to attract new borrowers. These incentives helped it to raise its share of new loans from 4.2 per cent to 7.6 per cent.

Air deal may force fares up

TRANSATLANTIC air fares could soar by up to 40 per cent unless British Airways and American Airlines are forced to give up hundreds of Heathrow landing slots in their proposed alliance, according to a study by the Consumer Association of America (Richard Thomson writes).

The study was published as talks between US and British officials on an "open skies" agreement restarted in Washington yesterday. The CAA said that reduced transatlantic competition resulting from the alliance could cost travellers an extra \$500 million a year.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Labour pours scorn on Anglian job cuts

ANGLIAN WATER, which cut 300 jobs yesterday, was attacked by Labour for not delivering a better service to John Major, the Prime Minister. The utility, responsible for the water supply in his Huntingdon constituency, announced a restructuring programme intended to improve customer service. It is shedding a quarter of its 1,200 workforce and has set aside £20 million to pay for redundancies.

Labour said the cuts were evidence that privatisation benefited companies but not customers. Ian McCartney, Labour's employment spokesman, called the cuts "another disgraceful example of how privatisation of the utilities has benefited a few at the top, with staff and customer service paying the price".

UK companies in top 30

FIVE British companies have been named among the world's 30 best stocks, as chosen by analysts worldwide for Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank. This compares with three from Japan and Switzerland and one from Germany. The five UK companies are Baa, BAT Industries, HSBC, Sema and Unilever. The companies were chosen for their long-term prospects and are expected to produce absolute returns of 20 per cent over the next year to 18 months.

MP attacks Halifax

DOUGLAS FRENCH, chairman of the Commons Building Society Group, has accused the Halifax Building Society, which plans to become a £10 billion bank this summer, of adopting a "morally indefensible" position over proposed bonus payouts for the elderly, widows and the disabled whose accounts are held in trust. He said that the Halifax's position in continuing to resist the principles set out in his Building Societies (Distributions) Bill was "untenable".

Rowell joins Celsis

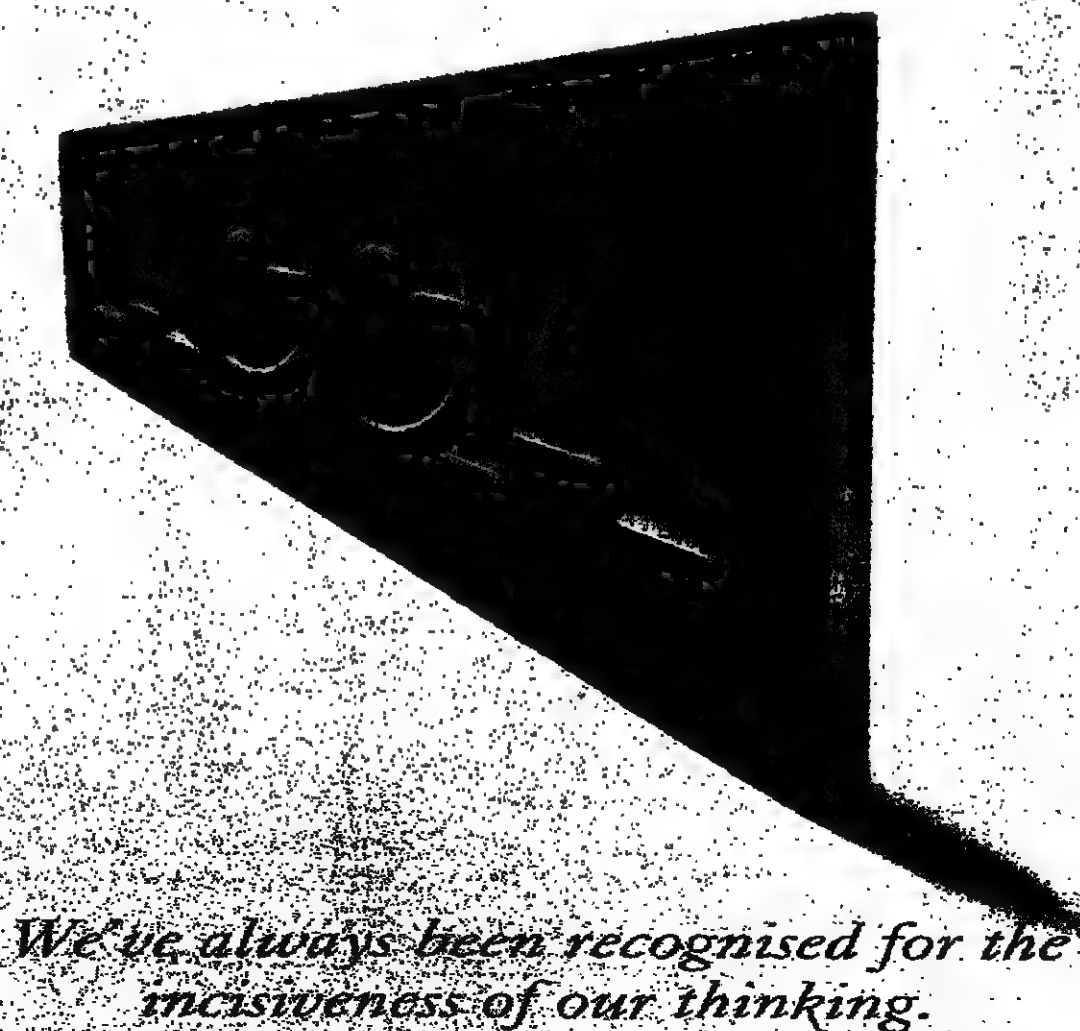
JACK ROWELL, England's rugby manager, has been named as chairman of Celsis International, the biotechnology company whose monitors detect contamination in foodstuffs. Mr Rowell, an accountant, will work 15 days a year as a non-executive and will be paid a basic salary of £20,000. He has been on the company's board for two years. Before that he was a director of Dalgety with responsibility for the Golden Wonder and Homegride divisions.

Shorts confirms jobs

SHORT BROTHERS, the Belfast planemaker, confirmed the creation of 1,000 jobs yesterday after the announcement by Bombardier, its parent company, that it had given the go-ahead for two new regional aircraft. Bombardier said it may become involved in larger passenger jet development in competition with Boeing and Airbus. Roy McNulty, Shorts chairman, said: "Our Bombardier aircraft business, since privatisation, has grown from nothing in 1989 to £150 million a year now."

Black joins Sotheby's

CONRAD BLACK, the Hollinger chairman who made his fortune from *The Daily Telegraph*, yesterday joined the board of Sotheby's, the auctioneers. Mr Black will serve as a member of Sotheby's audit and compensation committee. His appointment comes shortly after Sotheby's launched an internal review into allegations that it struggled art treasures into Britain from Italy. Sotheby's European arm admitted that the law had been broken and it suspended senior staff members.



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| Bucharest | £898 | £369 |
| Budapest | £690 | £290 |
| Ekaterinburg | £2,301 | £879 |
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| Kazan | £1,868 | £879 |
| Minsk | £1,066 | £449 |
| Moscow | £1,334 | £449 |
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| Penn. | £1,388 | £679 |
| Prague | £558 | £299 |
| Samarqand | £1,886 | £679 |
| Sofia | £986 | £319 |
| St Petersburg | £1,156 | £399 |
| Riga | £1,074 | £449 |
| Tashkent | £2,703 | £899 |
| Warsaw | £670 | £369 |
| Zagreb | £792 | £309 |

CHANGING TIMES

□ Big grocers enter the money market □ Rich rewards for WPP boss □ Rare censure for a City bank

Banking on convenience

ONE of the supermarket bosses now expanding into financial services was walking through the luxurious marbled lobby of the bank he had hooked up with. "Nice offices, these," he mused. "There must be a lot of money in banking."

Peter Ellwood, chief executive of Lloyds TSB, returned the compliment last week, saying that Tesco, Virgin and Marks & Spencer "frighten me more than the bigger traditional banks because they have got super brands and they are fleet of foot".

If you are in a business where your profits come from deciding the right time to take a few pennies off the price of a can of beans, one which is structured to ensure you receive a margin must seem quite attractive. British banks are on a roll; the current reporting season will show that they made £10 billion between them last year.

There are four areas where the supermarkets are well positioned to give them and other financial institutions a night-mare. First, stores can act as middlemen for mortgage customers, passing on the business to whichever bank or lender they are linked with. Ditto insurance, with the option that stores can also act as intermediaries.

There is money to be made from credit cards, by chipping away at the usurious rates now being charged by Access, Visa and their like. Finally, Virgin has shown how a well-known brand can make headway allied to an unexciting investment product.

What is not clear is where the consumer comes in. Mortgage and insurance brokers already exist to provide the best deal, but few people bother to shop around. By going with your supermarket's bank, you are displaying the same blind loyalty as those who stick with the same building society all their lives. Lower rates on credit cards offer some savings, but only to those who use them as a form of long-term borrowing rather than paying them off every month.

The main benefit is said to be convenience. How much more pleasant to sit in an office at your supermarket fixing up your finances: the alternative is an identical office at your bank or building society. Hardly seems much different, does it, especially

as the latter visits tend to be once-in-a-decade affairs?

We are in danger of taking the food retailers' propaganda for granted, rather than looking at the real value to the consumers of their expropriation of the margins previously taken by the banks and other financial businesses.

People are disenchanted with the banks, true. But supermarkets can go through a bad patch, as anyone who has followed the affairs of J Sainsbury recently will know.

Sorrell's big bill for making amends

IT WOULD be easy to view Martin Sorrell as the fattest of fat cats. Mr Sorrell, the chief executive of WPP, the world's largest advertising and marketing company, has already bagged £2.9 million in free shares, and, assuming that the stock price remains above 230p until mid-March, will collect another £2.7



million of freebies. The third and fourth tranches of his incentive scheme could raise his winnings to £28 million by 1999, assuming that the shares surpass certain trigger points.

The scheme may be enough to make even the most avaricious utility executive blush, but Mr Sorrell can take much of the credit for turning round the advertising industry's answer to the Titanic. WPP, the owner of J Walter Thompson and Ogilvy & Mather, nearly went bust six years ago. A combination of deep recession, high debt and bad timing forced WPP shares down to 25p at one point.

This left Mr Sorrell — responsible for this empire-building, but never lacking in self-confidence — with a challenge. He wrote himself an incentive scheme that, at the time, appeared nearly impossible to achieve, though not so impossible that it escaped criticism from some institutional shareholders. WPP's financial results have indeed improved, dramatically so, and debt levels have shrunk. The shares, as a result, have climbed to the point that they could trigger Mr Sorrell's first payment and are about to hand him another.

We would hate to rain on Mr Sorrell's victory parade, but a couple of things are worth bearing in mind. First, his incentive scheme was approved in mid-1995, when the economies of western Europe and America, its main markets, were roaring back to life. Given such economic growth, only disastrous management would have prevented WPP from clawing back some ground. Second, it may be premature to

laud Mr Sorrell as a true turnaround hero. The shares were above 600p in 1989, before it all fell apart. His rich reward has come from repairing some, but a long way from all, the damage that his earlier actions did to shareholder value.

Public check on Barings

MEET the new Barings — a bit like the old Barings. There was little more than a dull twitch when the bank was prodded through the bars of its cage on London Wall last night about the latest ruling from the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers.

Barings had been found guilty of a serious failure over a period of two months to obey the requirements of the Takeover Code, more through torpor, it would seem, than any degree of malice. The Panel handed out a public thrashing, and the beast turned round and went back to sleep again.

The matter concerned Applied Distribution, a food distributor whose dull name disguises a deeply boring nature that no one has become especially excited over before. Applied shares were idling at little more than 20p before Christmas but had nearly doubled by the end of December. The Code requires the Panel to be notified if, following a possible bid approach, the shares see an untoward rise, that rise being defined as 10 per cent. This Barings failed to do, even though various approaches had been received early in December.

While there is no actual evidence of a leak, it is pretty clear that someone either dealt or attempted to deal in the shares. That is not a matter for the Panel, and it has little to do with Barings either — the bank is merely being criticised for failing to keep in touch. But shares like this do not move without reason.

Do not expect much criminal action from the Stock Exchange or the other authorities for any insider dealing. Shares that do not rise in anticipation of a bid approach are the exception, not the rule. For its part the Panel is restricted to public criticism. But such action can hurt more than financial penalties. It does not do the client list any favours.

Takeover Panel gives Barings a reprimand

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE Takeover Panel yesterday reprimanded Barings, the merchant bank, for its conduct as adviser to Applied Distribution, a small warehousing and logistics company.

The panel also expressed concern about a leak of price-sensitive information about bid approaches made to the company (See Pennington, this page).

Barings is criticised for not consulting the panel on two occasions when Applied Distribution's share price moved sharply and a statement about takeover approaches would have been appropriate under the takeover code. Barings failed to respond to a request

for comment. The approaches were made in early December, a month after Applied Distribution had issued a profits warning.

The warning sent its shares tumbling from 62½p to a low of 21½p on December 18. But they then rallied in heavy trading to 40p by the end of the month and to 46½p on January 30.

The panel said yesterday: "The executive is naturally concerned that these price increases may have resulted from a leak in relation to the approaches received by Applied Distribution although there was no speculation about this in the media."

Barings has put forward various market explanations for the share price movement. The panel said: "These factors might constitute a plausible explanation, but it has not itself conducted an investigation into the dealings over this period." It would be up to the Stock Exchange or the Department of Trade and Industry to investigate possible leaks of price-sensitive information.

Applied Distribution finally announced that it had received the approaches after the close of trading on January 31. During that day, its share price rose more than 30 per cent. This took it above the level being offered by the

potential bidders. The panel said: "The failure to consult the executive in the period up to January 30, and also during the morning of January 31, and the delay in issuing the announcements on January 31 were breaches of the code for which Barings is held primarily responsible."

It said it wanted to emphasise the importance of the rule under which a share price movement of 10 per cent should be regarded as "unusual" and grounds for considering making an announcement. If the company and its advisers do not want to make an announcement, they should still consult the panel.

Bookings up, losses down at Airtours

AIRTOURS, the second largest tour operator, said yesterday its summer bookings are up by 45 per cent and it has cut its seasonal loss by more than a third (Marianne Curphey writes).

The pre-tax loss for the three months to December 31 was down from £18 million to £12 million. This included £1 million start-up costs for the summer programme of Sunquest Holidays in California.

David Crossland, chairman, said the rate of increase in bookings would level off over the year because of capacity constraints.

Shares in Airtours, which had risen earlier in the week on bid rumours, fell 6½p to 970p.

WPP shares hit by profit-taking

By ERIC REGULY

SHARES of WPP fell yesterday, but not far enough to jeopardise the £2.7 million bonus payments of Martin Sorrell, the chief executive (See Pennington, this page).

The shares of the advertising and marketing group closed at 252p, down 15p. Analysts said that the fall was because of profit-taking. The shares had climbed by about 10 per cent in recent weeks, on the expectation of strong financial results.

Mr Sorrell can collect the £2.7 million in free shares if the share price remains above 230p for 60 trading days. They broke through that level in mid-December and are on course to remain there until the March 14 trigger date.

WPP delivered profits at the

top end of City forecasts. In the year to the December 31, pre-tax profits climbed 35 per cent to £153.3 million, on turnover that rose 8 per cent to £7.1 billion. Earnings per share went from 9.1p to 13.3p and net debt declined 32 per cent to £145 million.

The company said that it would make £25 million available for share buybacks in the open market. The amount represents less than 2 per cent of the share capital, but the company said that a greater amount would result in an advance corporation tax write-off. Mr Sorrell would not say when the buybacks were likely to happen.

The final dividend of 1.144p, to be paid on July 14, raises the total to 1.7p, up 32 per cent.

Egypt Gas set to make AMEC £30m

AMEC, the construction group, is set to make a £30 million profit from the imminent sale of its 20 per cent stake in Egypt Gas, set up to maintain the gas distribution system in Cairo (Paul Dorman writes).

AMEC acquired its interest in Egypt Gas after installing the Cairo gas system in the early 1980s. The stake is valued at £4.3 million, but will be sold to a consortium of institutional investors for £38.1 million in cash. An announcement is expected today.

Egypt Gas made profits of £3.3 million in 1995 on turnover of £52.7 million. However, AMEC's 1995 profits only included £200,000 of dividends from Egypt Gas.

**SIEMENS
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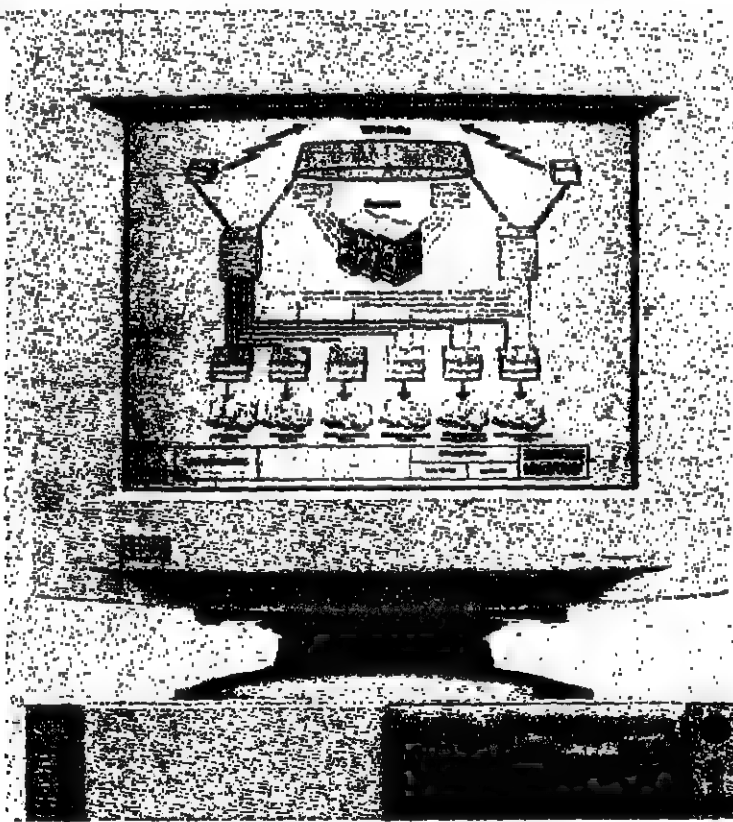
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STOCK MARKET

CLARE STEWART

SB leads way as shares close at another high

A BUSY trading session saw the London market close at a record high yesterday after the overnight high on Wall Street. More than £5 billion flowed into the market to push the FTSE 100 index 25.1 points higher to close at 4,357.4.

City dealers are expecting further progress, in spite of a weaker opening on Wall Street yesterday afternoon.

Drugs were back in the thick of the activity as the market gave further consideration to the 10 per cent rise in profits announced on Tuesday by SmithKline Beecham.

Positive talk from brokers helped the stock to move up sharply, leading the FTSE 100 with a rise of more than 5 per cent to 4,357.4, a gain of 46.4p, and comfortably ahead of its previous high of 4,314.5p.

Others in the sector followed suit with Glaxo gaining 25p to £10.50, while Medeva added 34p to 263.7p, after announcing better than expected results, with operating profits of £105 million and the total dividend increased to 4.3p.

Tobacco groups advanced on hopes that a number of lawsuits in the US might soon be settled. BAT moved up 17p to 545.5p, helped by speculation regarding a demerger of its financial interests, while Imperial Tobacco gained 10p to 430p.

United Biscuits, the pizzas to prawns food group, continued to attract attention, moving up 4p to 237.5p. Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch group, set to boost its coffers with the sale of its specialty chemicals businesses, slid back from early gains to end at £15.93, down 9p.

Profit-taking and disappointment with the scale of the £25 million share buy-back knocked shares in WPP, the media group, 15p lower to 252p. The group, where Martin Sorrell is heading for a record bonus, delivered a 35 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £153.3 million, with the final dividend increased 32 per cent to 1.14p.

Vodafone tuned into further gains, rising 10p to 299p on the back of positive comment, though rival mobile phone group Orange slipped 4p to 211p. Cable and Wireless added 7p to 505.5p after Mercury, its subsidiary, won a £48 million contract to supply Lloyds TSB.

Rentokil fell 7.5p to 473p, while Booker, the food group, was also unwanted, drifting



Martin Sorrell, of WPP, saw the shares slide 15p to 252p

7.5p lower to 356p. Court-audis, the chemicals group, dipped 3p to 370p, on whispers of lower demand for acrylic fibre, one of its key products.

Lower than expected restructuring costs at Anglian Water helped to buoy the shares, which added 9p to 639p. The water group is making a provision of £20

million and plans to shed up to 300 jobs.

Shares in HSBC, the banking group, dipped 3p to £15.54, after Forward Trust, a subsidiary, announced the £72 million acquisition of Eversholt Leasing, the train leasing company privatised in 1995.

Elsewhere in the banking sector Barclays was dogged by bears and in spite of mixed

warning, just three months after floating, its shares, launched at 70p in November, sank 13p to 46p.

General Accident was cheered 8p higher to 845p, while EMI Group, with results due next week, continued its recent strong form adding 23p to £12.44.

Rolls-Royce, the aero engine group, moved up 4p to 252p after winning a share in a

new US joint strike fighter programme.

Weak crude prices took the sheen off BP, which dropped 2p to 684p, with Shell also off, down 9p to £10.79. ITC Oil & Gas held steady at 91p in spite of the surprise resignation of Dr David Robson, chief executive.

Airtours dipped 5p to 971p after profit-taking. A reduction in capacity last summer helped the holiday group to reduce first-quarter losses by one third to £12.1 million.

London Forfeiting, the finance group, leapt 30p to 388p after better than expected results prompted analysts to upgrade forecasts. Pre-tax profits for 1996 jumped 40 per cent to £37.95 million.

Shares in Scottish & Newcastle fell back to 669p, down 6p, after the DTI ruling that will allow the two companies to buy back from suppliers other than S&N. Bass added 9p to 866p while Grand Metropolitan, part owner of the pub group, was unchanged at 494p.

The launch of the J Sainsbury new banking service failed to excite much interest with shares just edging ahead by 1p to 316p, while Tesco added 3p to 347p.

The £54 million acquisition by FirstBus of fellow operator CentreWest lifted its shares 5p to 240p, while lower profits from Porvair, chemicals group, knocked its shares 20p lower, to 250p.

Centrica, the retail arm of British Gas saw a late flurry of activity with more than 33 million shares changing hands. The shares after trading water for most of the day then added 3p to 664p, while BG, the exploration and distribution business, moved up adding 2p to 178p.

GILT-EDGED: Retail sales figures for January failed to excite morning trading in the gilt market. Prices however drifted lower in line with European markets during the afternoon. At the close, the gilt future was down 1/2p to £113.25. Treasury 8 per cent 2000 ended 1/2p lower at £104.25 while 8 per cent 2015 slid 1/2p to £106.25.

NEW YORK: Favourable January inflation figures failed to ignite a rally in the bond market and in shares the banking sector came in for some profit-taking. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 7.69 points lower at 7,059.77.

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MAJOR INDEXES

New York (midday): Dow Jones 7059.77 (-7.69) S&P Composite 815.62 (-0.67)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 18990.12 (+128.37)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 13100.32 (+3.38)

Amsterdam: EOE Index 784.23 (+2.87)

Sydney: All Ordinaries 3691.04 (-10.7)

Frankfurt: DAX 3253.75 (+3.44)

Stockholm: SMI 1179.29 (+14.21)

Paris: CAC 40 2789.76 (+22.76)

Zurich: SMI 1179.29 (+14.21)

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THE TIMES



CITY DIARY

How to stay happy and fat

KENNETH CLARKE apparently has no intentions of emulating Lord Lawson of Blaby if his sojourn in 11 Downing Street ends come election time. He takes as his model Sir Edward Heath, in more senses than one.

First, he wants to remain a politician, representing his constituents in the House of Commons for as long as they want him. Secondly, he intends, like Sir Edward, to remain a heavyweight. No Lawson wonder diet for him. Ken Clarke says that men over 50 have a choice between being happy and fat or thin and miserable and he prefers the former.

Think bank

IN THE on-going copper scandal it is Sumitomo Corporation, in which Sumitomo Bank has a tiny stake, that is covered with embarrassment over the expensive antics of Yasuo Hamanaka, its former chief copper trader currently standing trial in Japan. Both were part of the ancient House of Sumitomo until 1945, but were subsequently demerged by the Allies. As Shunichi Okuyama, Sumitomo Bank's managing director, explained yesterday: "We have never employed Yasuo Hamanaka and when you think of us think bank, bank, bank, not corporation." Got the message?

UNDETERRED by the announcement on Tuesday that four of its directors are to leave, Shandwick is going ahead with its April share bid. Richard Sermon, chairman of the City PR firm, will hold the fort at the party that promises to "Banish the Winter Blues". Chris Matthews, former chief executive, is not expected to be there.

SAINSBURY'S BANK



Hands on

AFTER five years following the company, Dick Barfield has been appointed a non-executive director of Quintain Estates & Development. Having helped to set up the property company in 1992, in his former role as chief investment manager of Standard Life, the director of the London Stock Exchange has committed himself to one day a month for a princely sum of £20,000 a year.

MAX DOLDING added another medal to his collection yesterday. The James Capel analyst has been crowned Cancer Research Campaign's "Supporter of the Year". After seven marathons, he has already raised £116,000 for the campaign. On April 13, along with 19 colleagues, he will be running the London Marathon in honour of Tim Bates, a colleague who died of cancer last year.

One of the best

WELL DONE Tilney Securities. The fast-moving agency broker, based in London and Liverpool, this week added its fourth new company brokering in five days, vaulting it into the top ten of corporate brokers. VHE Holdings comes after Hunters Quayle, the printer, Andrew Sykes, the engineer, and John Maunders, the builder, taking CTS through the 70 p.c. mark.

MORAG PRESTON

Europe's Court of Human Rights yesterday permitted Britain, along with other states that signed the European Convention, to make it illegal for sadomasochists to torture each other. This was described as "landmark judgment". It seems a pragmatic one from a court that knows it cannot afford to antagonise most of the people most of the time.

As usual, the court did what the Human Rights Commission recommended. But that was a close-run thing. A minority of 7 to 11 thought the British state was illegally interfering with the chaps' human right to privacy and must stop. Another year, the minority could easily have been the majority. A crude reading of the Convention suggests their case was better-founded than the winning argument, which conveniently ruled that being tortured for "pleasure" was a public health matter.

Human rights rules are meant to override transient democratic populism. This case, like many others, merely shows that any rules written by fallible human beings will be determined by the concerns, climate and intellectual consensus of the day. They are not universally agreed, let alone true. Europe's Convention, for instance, does not uphold "rights" in the UN declaration, including the right to work, the right to social security and the right of the family as an institution to state protection.

Postwar sages were anxious to stop their countries ever again sliding into fascist totalitarianism. They may not have envisaged upholding the right to deny that the

ensuing Holocaust ever happened, let alone the nastier activities of pervers.

This human rights regime, though unconnected to the European Union, is unfortunately a paradigm for key EU institutions. They were drawn up by a liberal establishment to answer fundamental issues of the day. They are virtually immune from democratic change, to a worse extent than America's constitution. They are run by people appointed by the same establishment. Often, they are barely accountable, like state industries or quangos.

That is why Britain's debate over economic and monetary union is sterile. It is conducted in terms of economics but overshadowed by political arguments over drawing lines in the sand to stem the tide of federalism.

As Lord Alexander of Weedon noted in a recent persuasive lecture, the governing political and business classes of continental countries are determined to achieve monetary union, and achieve it on time. Were it not for the sovereignty issue, British big business would be just as keen on a single currency, enthusiasm having grown apace since sterling recovered most of its 1992

Even Europe's economic truth will not hold for ever



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

devaluation. A single currency would cut the cost of risk and make life simpler. Although the euro will reflect the average strength of its member economies, rather than the 1960s-1980s strength of the mark, long-term interest rates would carry less risk premium than on currencies with a chequered past.

If the European central bank does its job on inflation, and member economies keep to the rules on public finance, big business would not need flexible national interest and exchange rates. This is just as well. The Thatcher revolution of the 1980s, which

reformed British industry via a deep, sustained, albeit unintentional slump, could no more be attempted than the Attlee government's postwar programme.

Multinationals, and most corner shops, want consensus for its own sake. For politicians, it is a useful second best. President Mitterrand started the drive for monetary union because he blamed the Bundesbank for the failure of France's socialist policies. Britain's Labour party was converted to the liberal consensus of the EU to control Thatcherism.

If change becomes so difficult, however, then the start-up detail becomes more important for business than for visionaries such as Chancellor Kohl. If Britain adopted a euro parity with sterling as strong as it is today, the economy would suffer as badly as it did in the exchange rate mechanism.

The pound is buoyed up artificially by interest rate expectations, in this case due to the state of the cycle. Having missed out the ERM phase, there is no guarantee that markets would adjust a floating pound's value in the short time between taking a decision and freezing parties. If France and Germany subsequently cut social security

taxes on employers, as seems likely, they would effectively devalue against British goods. State pension dilemmas on the Continent could force interest rates up.

Such issues merely illustrate that the statutes of an independent, and therefore unaccountable, European central bank can no more foresee the future than the Convention on Human Rights. Sensible economic policy is even less universally and eternally true. Private enterprise and sound money have a long track record but policy techniques and needs change. The EMU regime reflects today's orthodoxy. Yet Japan, which was served well by such orthodoxy, is now urged to keep a big budget deficit to meet new conditions.

This would not matter if institutions and agendas could be changed. Scenarios assume, with good reason, that the European central bank will become as much a prisoner of its own culture as the Commission on Human Rights. As a dedicated bureaucracy, it will also accumulate powers and regulations over financial markets and public finance to reinforce its *idees fixes*. There will be no equivalent of the White House, which can reverse the agenda of the World Bank by appointing a new boss.

EMU will be another Common Agricultural Policy, impervious to changing circumstances. Until the fundamental power structures of the Union are changed, so that its institutions can be changed and powers removed as well as added, economic progress will continue to come at a huge and often unacceptable political price.

Janet Bush finds Kenneth Clarke preparing for an election scrap

Heavyweight ready to be counted out

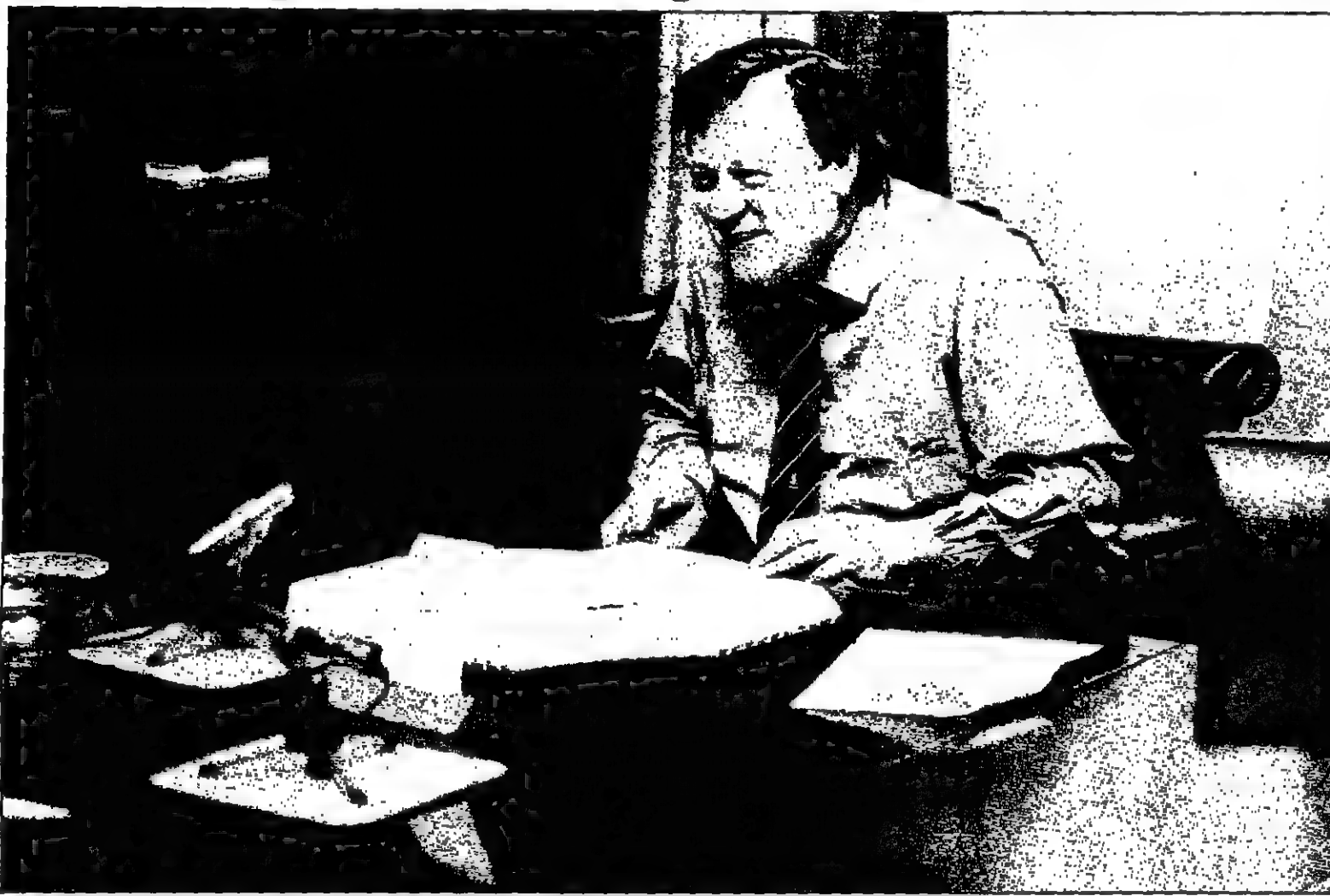
Kenneth Clarke gives every impression of being resigned to losing the election. At one point in his interview with *The Times* in his Treasury office yesterday, a "when they get in" dropped into the Chancellor's conversation about the Labour Party before he hastily corrected himself with an "if they get in". Was this another slip of the tongue under pressure, as Mr Clarke described Malcolm Rifkind's admission that the Government is hostile to the single currency on yesterday's BBC *Today* programme.

Despite Mr Clarke's inadvertent honesty about his party's electoral prospects, he still talks a good fight. He has a masterful knack of making Gordon Brown look inept, a line he clearly intends to bludgeon home when the election campaign proper gets underway. His strategy is to portray himself as the economic steward with a track record of competence, the Chancellor who has delivered a combination of low inflation and healthy growth which should be sustained for several more years. In contrast, he paints Labour as lightweight, refusing to come clean on policy detail and taking refuge in successful Conservative policies.

"They are fighting a modern American/Australian type campaign, don't have any policies, strike a series of attitudes. If the economy is doing well, get as close to the Government as you can: sound on economic policy. Enter into no commitments."

Such a strategy inevitably means that it is difficult to detail the policy differences between a Clarke chancellorship and a Brown one. Where is the clear water between their policies? "Mine are clear, stated and have been pursued for four years in the teeth of bitter opposition from the Labour Party at every stage. Gordon's are an apparent pale shadow of mine at the moment, but that is only a few weeks before the election," he replies. "I am deeply suspicious of people who give ringing endorsements of parts of my policy when it's six weeks to go to polling day or ten weeks to polling day or however long it is."

Mr Clarke rejects the notion that, by adopting swathes of the Government's macro-economic policies (such as the commitment to stick to current public spending plans for two years and the pledge not to



Kenneth Clarke showed yesterday how to talk a good fight, though he inadvertently indicated that his "lightweight" shadow is landing punches

increase personal income taxes for five years), the Labour Party has neutralised the economy as an election issue. He believes that the economy remains the biggest election issue and that there is growing disenchantment with Labour's failure to detail some of its policies, refusing to answer elementary questions on its windfall tax, falling to publicly come out with an inflation target.

"I don't think the public trust Tony Blair as much as they used to, and I don't think they trust Gordon Brown as much as they used to and I find a very ready response from non-political men and women when they say that Labour won't answer any straightforward questions about their economic policies. I agree with the general public who have these rather disturbing views and I think it is perfectly legitimate politics to emphasise those because the facts support the case against them."

The Chancellor continued to display robust scepticism about whether Mr Brown will be able to stick to the Government's current spending plans, charging that Labour's arithmetic simply doesn't add up. He notes, for example, that the Government's plans rely on substantial privatisation re-

engineering. "I think the public are rightly wary of populist remarks. I think the key thing when you are fighting an election is firstly to set out your genuine intentions and secondly to create a climate in which you are likely to be able to deliver those intentions. I don't think you should just be making

example, abolish Miras mortgage tax relief, whittle away tax exemption on pensions or raise corporation tax."

Most frustratingly for a Chancellor who has presided over a period of relative economic success is the prospect of handing over the keys to 11 Downing Street when the outlook is, in many respects, bright. Mr Clarke admits that, if Labour wins the election, Mr Brown will find an improving fiscal situation as well as a relatively benign inflation picture.

He rejects recent warnings from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research that whichever party wins the election would have to cut spending or raise taxes by an estimated £14 billion if Britain is to erase its stubborn structural

and a following wind" to achieve.

On the monetary side of the policy equation, the Chancellor admits that, on current evidence, Mr Brown should face no overwhelming need to raise interest rates substantially to combat inflation. "If he came in and decided that he had to be terribly macho and start banging up interest rates, then I would probably be the loudest of his critics unless something happened between now and then which implied that there was a sudden change in prospects two years out."

For himself, Mr Clarke comes extremely close to acknowledging that he has got away with not raising interest rates before the election. "I am not raising rates because I don't have to," he says. Right up until the election and beyond? "Damn the election!" he replies cheerily.

On the biggest long-term decision facing the British economy, Mr Clarke strikes a balance between the positive potential of the single currency and its possible risks, thus continuing to tread the finest of lines necessarily imposed by the uneasy truce between different factions in his own party. But, on the day that Malcolm Rifkind delivered a robust critique of the European project in Germany, even the Conservative Party's Mr Europe was more sceptic than enthusiast.

He made it clear that creative accounting to reach the Maastricht treaty's 3 per cent limit on budget deficits or compromise on the 3 per cent figure itself would rule Britain out of the single currency. In his opinion, it is unlikely that a significant number of countries would demonstrate that they had both met the Maastricht criteria in 1997 and, importantly, proved that their convergence was sustainable, on the current timetable. For this reason, delay to the start of monetary union beyond January 1, 1999, was quite likely and, whenever the single currency went ahead, it was likely to involve only a small number of countries.

And what of life after Downing Street if his party loses the election? Mr Clarke shows no signs of incipient withdrawal symptoms. "I shall carry on being a politician," he says, breezily. "I propose to imitate Ted Heath and stick in the House of Commons for as long as my electorate in Rushcliffe can put up with me."

The public are wary of populist remarks. The key thing is to set out your genuine intentions

policy on the hoof on particular types of tax or tax rates."

A responsible Chancellor should keep all his tax options open, Mr Clarke says, apparently not able himself to rule out raising tax rates. He refuses to give any assurances to the electorate on whether a Conservative government would, for

A shrewd mix of glitz and grit

Adam Jones on the business philosophy driving Welcome Break's new owner

The shrewdest shoppers are those who mix designer labels with more prosaic purchases — splash out on the Armani suit by all means but keep buying your underwear at Marks & Spencer. The experience of Investcorp, which this week won the bidding for the Welcome Break motorway service station chain, suggests this combination can work very profitably in investment banking.

Investcorp and its clients are former owners of such glitzy names as Gucci, the Italian fashion house, and Tiffany, the jeweller, and the current owners of Mondri, the German fashion house, and Breguet and Ebel. They also retain a stake in Saks Fifth Avenue, the US retailer, which Investcorp floated last year. However, the Bahrain-listed bank has interspersed its glamorous investments with grittier deals, such as the purchase of Circle K, the US convenience store chain.

Record profits in 1996 and 1995 suggest the mix is working. The net profit for 1996 rose 28.6 per cent, to \$90.4 million (£56.5 million). Total assets reached \$1.7 billion by the end of the year; shareholders' funds were up to \$516 million.

There is a common thread to

Investcorp's choices, says Nemir Kirdar, the Iraqi chief executive who was forced to flee Iraq in 1958 after the bloody coup that ended the monarchy. He founded the bank in 1982 through a public listing in Bahrain that raised \$50 million. Another \$50 million was raised subsequently. Previous invest-

ment banking experience in the US with Chase Manhattan had shown him that every significant company reaches a stage where management or capital difficulties impede performance. Investcorp targets companies in this position, particularly those with a strong brand name, with the aim of a four to five-year turnaround through management change and/or capital injection, followed by



Kirdar: unconventional

flotation and a profitable exit. Gucci is the highest-profile success so far. Riven by family infighting and an unfashionable image, Investcorp bought the final 50 per cent from Maurizio Gucci, the grandson of the founder, in 1993. Sales then almost doubled between 1994 and 1995 and

Gucci was floated on the New York Stock Exchange. The offer price of \$22 per share valued the company at \$1.3 billion.

Mr Kirdar says Investcorp now looks at about 200 propositions a year, intensively researching ten to 15. He says: "We end up doing three or four deals a year."

The £476 million Welcome Break deal was agreed with Granada, which had to shed the chain to

avoid a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Investcorp says it aims to improve quality and profitability by making an extra £50 million available. The purchase takes the total number of deals in the last 15 years to about 60.

The way the bank raises money is unconventional. Investcorp was designed to be a channel for capital from the Gulf States of the Middle East. In its purchases, the bank generally acts as principal, paying partly in cash and partly in debt from Western banks. It then syndicates the equity among clients in six Gulf countries, who have the option of buying into the deal in increments of \$100,000, the typical commitment being \$500,000 to \$1 million or passing on the opportunity.

Investcorp does keep a portion of the equity involvement for itself. This is in keeping with the capital structure of the bank, where 37.5 per cent of shares are held by about 90 senior staff. The bank has 200 employees in Bahrain, New York and London offices. The rest of the company is owned by about 10,000 shareholders, including a core of particularly wealthy individuals in the region, known as "The Group of 50". Their holdings, however, tend to be about 0.5 per cent.

NatWest Interest rates

NatWest announces the following changes in interest rates effective from (and including) 28th February 1997

Lending

PERSONAL LENDING

| Tailored Loan: | Annual Nominal Rate |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| £5,000 - £9,999 | 10.0% |
| £10,000+ (Unsecured) | 9.5% |
| £10,000+ (Secured) | 9.0% |

All regulated consumer credit agreements are varied accordingly.

NatWest

National Westminster Bank Plc, 41 Lombury, London EC2P 2BP

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Premier joins Gabriel

Premier Investment, the Guildford-based fund manager, is to join the Alternative Investment Market via a £5 million reverse takeover by Gabriel Trust. Shares in Gabriel — to be renamed Premier Asset Management — were suspended yesterday as the deal was announced.

Jonathan Fry and Mike O'Shea, investment directors of Premier, are to be joint managing directors of the new company.

Gabriel Trust, which supplies equity capital to smaller companies, joined the AIM in August. Its head, David Pearl, who has built a 26.11 per cent stake in Chardfield Fund Management, stays with it.

Gabriel is making an initial cash payment of £1.5 million plus £2.5 million in guaranteed loan notes and Gabriel ordinary shares.

Pilot defence

Pilot Investment Trust has appointed Merrill Lynch International broker in its defence against a bid by Colin McLean, of Scottish Value Management. MLI advised Kleinwort European Privatisation Investment Trust (Kepit) last year after investors, including Mr McLean, prompted it to ditch Kleinwort Benson as fund manager. Kepit later unlisted. Sir Peter Michael, Pilot's chairman, is to leave its defence to other directors. He holds 59 per cent of Rutherford Asset Management, Pilot's manager.

Brent order

Swale Process, part of Brent International, the speciality chemicals group, has agreed a five-year, £15 million deal to supply coatings to Van Leer Metalized Products. Metalized papers are increasingly used in packaging, and Van Leer is a market leader in a version used for beer-bottle labels. Shares in Brent, which has been recovering from a fall in profits, rose 1½p, to 88½p.

Medeva poised for growth in America

By ERIC REGULY

MEDEVA, the pharmaceuticals group, said that it was poised to expand rapidly in America now that its Rochester acquisition had been integrated into operations.

Rochester gave Medeva a portfolio of ten products and, more importantly, a distribution and sales network in the world's largest drugs market.

Bill Bogie, chief executive, said it would be used as a platform to introduce drugs that Medeva intends to buy from other companies. The company does not develop its own drugs. Dr Bogie said: "We can put anything through this network."

Medeva bought Rochester last July from Rhône-Poulenc Rorer, the Franco-American pharmaceuticals company, for \$370 million. It was Medeva's largest acquisition.

To reflect its growing presence in the US, Medeva is to transfer the listing of its American depositary receipts to the New York Stock Exchange. However, a full listing is unlikely.

Strong sales of Rochester's



John Baker, Medeva chairman, left, and Bill Bogie

drugs were behind the 30 per cent rise in overall sales, to £332 million in the year to December 31. The sales of Rochester's products in the half year since the acquisition were \$77 million, or more than

three-quarters of Rochester's total sales of \$100 million in 1995.

One of the high-flying Rochester drugs is fentanyl, an obesity treatment, whose half-year sales, at £22 million,

exceeded the total sales in the previous year.

Medeva reported pre-tax profits of £103.5 million, before restructuring charges, up 31 per cent. Earnings per share were 20.8p, against 16.9p. Profits after a restructuring charge of £65.2 million were £38.5 million.

More than half the charge went to upgrading Rochester's manufacturing operations, allowing them to make Medeva's existing American products and any others that it will acquire, and consolidating the two companies' administrative sites.

The charge also included a £14 million writedown of Medeva's hospital products business in the US.

Dr Bogie said that he expected to form more alliances with biotechnology companies this year, but would not provide details. Medeva recently formed a partnership with Peptide Therapeutics, a vaccines discovery company.

A final dividend of 3.15p, to be paid on May 23, makes the total dividend 4.8p, up 20 per cent. The shares closed at 283½p, up 3½p.

Lorien to focus on integration

By TOM TUGENDHAT

THE rapid growth of Lorien, the information technology consultancy that has raised £30 million in the last six months, looks set to pause this year as the company concentrates on integrating its three recent acquisitions.

Lorien paid £11 million last August for FE International, the management consultancy. More recently, it has bought Arena Resources, an agency that provides IT contract staff, and Frost Berkeley Associates, which provides IT staff for financial services companies.

Although Lorien said it remains in a strong position to fund further acquisitions, it intends to spend 1997 consolidating its market positions.

The company was reporting pre-tax profits of £1.9 million, before exceptional items, for the year to November 26. This was almost double the previous year's total. Turnover jumped from £29.1 million to £45.7 million.

Stripping out the effect of exceptional items, earnings rose from 12.1p to 15.4p. Lorien will pay a final dividend of 5p a share, almost doubling the total payout to 7.5p.

French pave way for Thomson-CSF sale

THOMSON, the French electronics group, will be split in two to ensure a rapid privatisation of its defence arm. Thomson-CSF, the French Government said yesterday. The announcement, confirming the Government had abandoned plans for a public flotation of Thomson-CSF, paved the way for a straight fight between Lagardère, owner of Matra, and Alcatel Alsthom.

The first attempt to privatise Thomson ended in fiasco, with an independent commission blocking proposals to sell the consumer electronics division, Thomson Multimedia, to Daewoo, the South Korean firm. In an attempt to prevent a second failure, the French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, has decided to postpone privatisation of Multimedia, which has debts of £14 billion. He is confident Thomson-CSF can be sold off this summer once it has been freed from its troubled consumer-electronics partner.

Winchester TV boost

WINCHESTER Multimedia, the company that has seen its shares slide far below the price at which it listed on the Alternative Investment Market, yesterday received a boost from an agreement to broadcast two of its children's series on television in North America. Winchester, whose shares floated at 100p, has been hit by the collapse of ECF, a magazine publisher, and the weak performance of Rainbow, the film in which it invested £1 million. Winchester's shares yesterday climbed 8p, to close at 70½p.

FirstBus faces referral

FIRSTBUS, the transport operator, will pay £54 million for CentreWest, a London bus company, in an agreed takeover. FirstBus is offering 2.5 FirstBus shares for each CentreWest share, valuing each share at 586p. The Office of Fair Trading said it is considering recommending referring the deal to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The OFT wants public comments by March 5. FirstBus has agreed to refinance CentreWest's net debts, including its loan stock, for an amount not expected to exceed £30 million.

Porvair's price slips

SHARES in Porvair, which makes skins for footballs and other synthetic materials, fell 20p to 250p yesterday after the company detailed the problems it has suffered over the past year. Poor sales from its glove inserts and a difficult market from Seles, its latest acquisition held pre-tax profits to £4.2 million (£5.1 million) for the year to November 30. The total dividend rises to 5.6p (5.4p), with a final payment of 3.7p, due on April 10. This is in spite of a 39 per cent fall in earnings per share, to 11p. *Tempos, page 28*

GEC links to Siemens

GEC has merged its telecommunications arm with Siemens, the German electronics group, in a joint venture that will employ 3,000 people and have an estimated turnover of £265 million. The new Siemens GEC Communications Systems, in which both groups have an equal stake, was announced last summer and operations began yesterday. It will pool the GPT business systems division, GPT Communications Systems and Siemens Business Communication Systems.

Advanced Power shares fall 30%

By FRASER NELSON

SHARES in Advanced Power fell a further 30 per cent yesterday after the recently-listed electrical component supplier gave warning that its profits would be hit by sluggish demand.

The shares, which had fallen 26 per cent since the start of the week, hit a low of 41½p before closing at 46½p. The company joined the market at 70p last November.

The warning confirmed fears that the market for ISDN digital phone lines is softening. Roger Robinson, chief executive, said: "The prices of ISDN lines in Britain are the highest in the world, and this has been hitting our

customers quite hard. We didn't make any forecast when we floated, but the expectations of short-term growth have certainly changed."

While only 40 per cent of the company's profits come from ISDN-related products, Henry Cooke Corporate Finance, its broker, cut the profits forecast to £850,000 for 1997, against the £1.5 million expected at flotation.

Analysts are expecting similar warnings from the sector. Shares of Premier Farnell have lost 25 per cent of their value in the last three weeks, and IOC International shares fell 11 per cent after a director sold a £62,000 stake.

Sharp adds edge to Capital fight

CAPITAL CORPORATION, the casino operator fighting a £180 million bid, yesterday bolstered its board by promoting Ernest Sharp to deputy chairman (Alasdair Murray writes).

Capital said it expects Mr Sharp to play a major role as the hostile bid from the rival London Clubs International unfolds. He has been a non-executive director since 1993 and has served as chairman of Somersfield, the supermarket group.

Capital, which has rejected the bid, said it is awaiting details of the all-paper offer before issuing a defence. Capital shares fell 4½p, to 192p. London Clubs lost 1p, to 380p, valuing its bid at 178.6p.

Inntrepreneur backed by OFT

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

INNTREPRENEUR, the pub company, yesterday won vital concessions from the Office of Fair Trading over its beer supply agreements — clearing the way for the company to float next year.

John Taylor, Minister for Corporate and Consumer Affairs, ruled that Inntrepreneur should no longer be obliged to free its pubs from tied beer supply agreements in March 1998. Mr Taylor also ended restrictions on the size of the company's pub estate and the requirement to take a guest beer.

But Inntrepreneur will now be obliged to allow its tenants to choose beer supply agree-

ments with brewers other than Scottish & Newcastle, when its supply deal expires in March 1998. Inntrepreneur, which is jointly owned by Grand Metropolitan and Foster's, welcomed the deal, saying it would enable it to become more competitive and exact greater purchasing power.

The company has fought a series of acrimonious legal battles with some tenants over rents and supply agreements in the past few years. The latest agreement is likely to provoke further lawsuits from publicans who claim they signed leases on the understanding that they would be free of the tie arrangements by 1998.

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- Pre-tax profit up 18% to £392 million (excluding conversion costs)
- Cost:income ratio down from 48.9% to 45.8%
- Unit trust and life funds under management up 58% to over £1 billion

- UK Stockmarket Fund ranked in top quartile of unit trusts over one, three and five years.
- Net mortgage lending up 50% to £1.4 billion

Charities called to account

A black and white portrait of a middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a textured, mottled grey.

resent a departure from the recommendations and might be held to be a failure to show such a view.

In these circumstances, charity trustees would need to have strong grounds, which must be disclosed in the accounts and which may need to be justified to the Commissioners, that a (more) true and fair view is provided by non-consolidation. The fact that both the FRS and the ACI exempt small and medium-sized companies from doing so might not be held to represent sufficient grounds.

Auditors of unincorporated charities have a statutory duty to report, in certain circumstances, to the appropriate regulatory authority. Although there is no equivalent statutory duty which applies to auditors of charitable companies, they would need to follow the requirements of SAS 120.

For unincorporated charities and charitable companies not subject to an audit, the level of scrutiny and the qualifications required to carry out that scrutiny differ. Unless changes to the 1985 Act are made, this latter conflict is likely to be magnified by a recent DTI consultative document which proposes to abandon a statutory requirement for audit exemption reports.

The provisions in the 1993 Act, the Regulations and the revised SORP herald a daunting new regime on which preparers of charity accounts and their advisers should now be focusing attention.

The new regime represents the culmination of many years' debate, which has run parallel to the increasingly visible profile which charities now enjoy, and is no more than commensurate with the important role that charities play in the UK today.

Richard Derwent is a chartered accountant and author of *Charities: An Industry Accounting and Auditing Guide* (Accountancy Books, PO Box 620, Milton Keynes; E65; Call 01908 248000).

What would granny have made of it?

IN his battle against off balance sheet wheezes and creative accounting generally, Sir David Tweedie, chairman of the Accounting Standards Board, has often used the folksy test of "if your granny would think it was wrong, then it probably is wrong". After the decisions which came out of the Review Panel on off balance sheet finance this week, all grannies who are in nursing homes should be asking for the account.

The decision over the accounting of Associated Nursing Services (ANS) is being seen at the Financial Reporting Review Panel as a landmark case. Since November 1995 the panel has been arguing with ANS, a long-term healthcare provider, over two areas of accounts. The first to do with joint venture, the second with sale and leaseback arrangements. Both were to do with Financial Reporting Standard 5, FRSS, which was intended to tackle off balance sheet finance. Its overriding principle was that "a reporting entity's financing statements should report the substance of the transactions into which it has entered". Like many of the ASB's rules, the aim was to make companies think about what they were reporting and to ensure that they stuck to the spirit of the rules rather than the more obscurantist letter of the law. The ASB had "noted the development of complex schemes that could obscure the true extent of a company's borrowings and the assets and liabilities they finance, and schemes that treated as sales transactions which were in reality financing".

It was always clear that the "granny test" would loom large in this one. The greatest creative accounting sin of the late 1980s was that of shifting debt off the balance sheet via some scheme or other. The shareholders would be oblivious of the arrangement. No sign of it would appear on the balance sheet except, of course, greatly enhanced earnings.

So the Review Panel has been looking around for a good test case. It was probably unfortunate that the accounts of ANS turned up when they did. As a result, what the finance director at ANS describes as "a very long and protracted discussion" took place.

Howard Williams, of Clark Whitehill, which audits ANS, said: "Until a month ago we were confident." Herbert Smith, the company's lawyers, had said that the sale and leaseback scheme the company was using did not fall foul of FR85. Then the

Review Panel, as it is entitled to do, said it would take the company's accounts to court for a ruling.

At this point, the case collapsed. Taking a company to court is the panel's final sanction and one that Edwin Glasgow, QC, its chairman, takes extremely seriously. No company has ever risked it. They have always backed down. And so did ANS. The company has now restated its accounts.

But the shock waves will continue. The sale and leaseback arrangement it had bought, like many such arrangements, was an off-the-peg scheme tailored to the industry. It was provided by Nursing Home Properties (NHP), which exists to provide specialist nursing home property investment. Normally under a sale and leaseback arrangement a company will sell a fixed asset, such as buildings, to a specialist financial organisation. This effectively removes the asset from the company's balance sheet. And, more crucially, it also removes any liabilities, such as mortgages, that relate to the asset. The company then rents back the asset for a period of time, usually for its original purpose. This is standard practice throughout the retail world in particular. The result is that, in the words of Daniel Francis, NHP's finance director, "there are implications in this ruling for every company in the country". Certainly the ruling should provide an avalanche of work for lawyers and accountants as they seek to establish quite what David Tweedie's granny might

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think of their arrangements. The key to such schemes is how far the deal distances the company, when it sells its buildings and then leases them back, from the concept of ownership. The Review Panel took the view that "the nature of the transaction was such that not all the significant rights or other access to benefits relating to the asset in question and not all the significant exposure to the risk inherent in those benefits, had been transferred to the purchaser".

The implication, said the panel, was that "an asset should have remained on the consolidated balance sheet and the sale proceeds should have been included in borrowings, with consequential profit and loss account adjustments".

Or to put it another way, you should have asked your granny if she thought you still owned the nursing home.



**ROBERT
BRUCE**

THIS morning sees one of the great annual gatherings of the financial reporting world. At the Mansion House in the City the Lord Mayor of London will preside over the presentation of the annual awards for the best published report and accounts. The awards are sponsored by the Stock Exchange and the Institutes of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland. And certainly the English Institute will be looking carefully at the

winning entries. This week it published a research paper, *Financial Graphs in Corporate Annual Reports*. Its conclusions were stark: "UK companies are among the most likely to use graphical representation to present a distorted view of the underlying data."

HARSH words were said as the UK Government's case

GREAT excitement in the media and entertainment department of Chantry Vella-cott last Thursday. Jerome Walton, who normally deals with people such as the Rolling Stones, had to vacate his office rather swiftly so that a secretary could use it to give birth. Molly McHugh (51b 140z) and her mother Debbie are said to be doing fine. A spokesman said: "But the partners are recovering slowly."

ROBERT BRUCE

against Arthur Andersen over the ill-fated investment in John DeLorean's gull-winged sports car was thrown out of the New York courts this week. The judge said: "What lies ahead is the arduous task of reducing this case from a miasma of frequently rhetorical and conclusory allegations and a Niagara of paper to a manageable and focused dispute." Perhaps he would like to help out over the forthcoming general election, too.

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- French and Italian businesses pre-tax profits up to £12 million
- General insurance business pre-tax profits up 55% to £15million
- "Another strong performance with record profits, showing the benefits of

our diversification strategy. We are well placed for future growth following conversion and flotation." *It's good to be with the*

JOHN STEWART, GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE

It's good to be with the
WOOLWICH
— BUILDING SOCIETY —

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32 UNIT TRUST PRICES

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Equities retain their gains

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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Equities retain their g

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. The previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

| 1987-88 | High | Low | Company | Price | Chg | % | P/E | 1987-88 | High | Low | Company | Price | Chg | % | P/E |
|---------|------|-----|------------------|--------|-----|---|-----|---------|------|-----|---------|--------|-----|---|-----|
| 34 | 31 | 29 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 35 | 32 | 30 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 36 | 33 | 31 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 37 | 34 | 32 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 38 | 35 | 33 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 39 | 36 | 34 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 40 | 37 | 35 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 41 | 38 | 36 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 42 | 39 | 37 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 43 | 40 | 38 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 44 | 41 | 39 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 45 | 42 | 40 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 46 | 43 | 41 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 47 | 44 | 42 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 48 | 45 | 43 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 49 | 46 | 44 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 50 | 47 | 45 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |

| ENGINEERING VEHICLES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------|-----|------------------|--------|-----|---|-----|---------|------|-----|---------|--------|-----|---|-----|
| 1987-88 | High | Low | Company | Price | Chg | % | P/E | 1987-88 | High | Low | Company | Price | Chg | % | P/E |
| 51 | 48 | 46 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 52 | 49 | 47 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 53 | 50 | 48 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 54 | 51 | 49 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 55 | 52 | 50 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 56 | 53 | 51 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 57 | 54 | 52 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 58 | 55 | 53 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 59 | 56 | 54 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 60 | 57 | 55 | Simon & Schuster | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 37 1/2 | 34 | 32 | Donald | 32 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 21 |

| FOOD MANUFACTURERS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|------|-----|---------|-------|-----|---|-----|---------|------|-----|---------|-------|-----|---|-----|
| 1987-88 | High | Low | Company | Price | Chg | % | P/E | 1987-88 | High | Low | Company | Price | Chg | % | P/E |

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TONIGHT'S CRASH

STRESS

8am **8pm**

NEW WAYS TO

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Men's Health

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Damages guidelines for jury trying police actions

Thompson v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis
Hsu v Saxe

Before Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Auld and Sir Brian Neill

[Judgment February 19]

Guidelines as to the directions to be given to a jury assessing damages in civil actions against the police were given by the Court of Appeal in order to establish some relationship between such awards and damages for personal injuries.

An award of £50,000 was the absolute maximum that was appropriate for exemplary damages in such cases and then only where officers of at least the rank of superintendent had been involved in the unlawful conduct.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment dismissing an appeal by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis against an award of £51,500 damages by Judge Quentin Edwards, QC and a jury at Central London County Court on June 12, 1995 to Claudette Thompson for false imprisonment, assault and malicious prosecution.

An appeal by the commissioner against an award of £220,000 damages by Judge Quentin Edwards, QC and a jury at Central London County Court on March 28, 1996 to Kenneth Hsu for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and assault was allowed to the extent of reducing the damages to £35,000.

Mr Ben Emmerson for Miss Thompson; Mr David Pannick, QC and Miss Fiona Barron for the commissioner.

Mr Edward Fitzgerald, QC and Mr Ben Emmerson for Mr Hsu; Mr David Pannick, QC and Mr Nicholas Ainley for the commissioner.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS, giving the judgment of the court, said that in a number of recent cases members of the public had been awarded large sums of exemplary damages by juries against the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis for unlawful conduct towards them by the police. As a result the present appeals had been brought by the commissioner.

The intention was to clarify the directions which a judge should include in a summing-up to assist the jury as to the amount of damages, particularly exemplary damages, which it was appropriate for them to award a plaintiff who was successful in such an action.

Guidance that should be given while there was no formula which was appropriate for all cases and the precise figure of a summing-up was very much a matter within the discretion of the trial judge. It was suggested that in many cases it would be convenient to include in a summing-up on the issue of damages additional directions on the following lines. It should be explained to the jury that if they found in the plaintiff's favour the only remedy which they

had power to grant was an award of damages. Save in exceptional situations such damages were only awarded as compensation and were intended to compensate the plaintiff for any injury or damage which he had suffered. They were not intended to punish the defendant.

2 As the law stood at present compensatory damages were of two types:

(a) ordinary damages which the court would suggest should be described as basic, and (b) aggravated damages. Aggravated damages could only be awarded where they were caused by the plaintiff and where there were aggravating features about the defendant's conduct which justified the award of aggravated damages. Where special damages were claimed in respect of some specific pecuniary loss that claim should be explained separately.

3 The jury should be told that the basic damages would depend on the circumstances and the degree of harm suffered by the plaintiff. But they should be provided with an appropriate bracket to use as a starting point. The judge would be responsible for determining the bracket, and the court envisaged that in the ordinary way the judge would have heard submissions on the matter from counsel in the absence of the jury.

4 In a straightforward case of wrongful arrest and imprisonment or malicious prosecution the jury should be informed of the appropriate figure to be taken as the correct starting point for basic damages for the actual loss of liberty or for the wrongful prosecution, and also given an appropriate ceiling figure. It should be explained that these were no more than guideline figures based on the judge's experience and on awards in other cases and the actual figure was one on which they must decide.

5 In a straightforward case of wrongful arrest and imprisonment or malicious prosecution the starting point was likely to be about £500 for the first hour during which the plaintiff had been deprived of his or her liberty. After the first hour an additional sum was to be awarded, but that sum should be on a reducing scale so as to keep the damages proportionate with those payable in personal injury cases and because the plaintiff was entitled to have a higher rate of compensation for the initial shock of being arrested. As a guideline the court considered, for example, that a plaintiff who had been wrongly kept in custody for 24 hours should for that alone normally be regarded as entitled to an award of about £3,000.

6 In the case of malicious prosecution, the figure should start at about £2,000 and for prosecution continuing for as long as two years, the case being taken to the crown court, an award of about £10,000 could be appropriate. If a malicious prosecution resulted in a conviction which was only set aside on an appeal that would justify a larger award to reflect the longer period during which the

plaintiff had been in peril and had been caused distress.

7 The figures which the court had identified so far were provided to assist the judge in determining the bracket within which the jury should be invited to place their award. The court appreciated, however, that circumstances could vary dramatically from case to case and that those and subsequent figures which the court provided were not intended to be applied in a mechanistic manner.

8 If the case was one in which aggravated damages were claimed and could be appropriately awarded, the nature of aggravated damages should be explained to the jury. Such damages could be awarded where there were aggravating features about the case which would result in the plaintiff not receiving sufficient compensation for the injury suffered if the award were restricted to a basic award. Aggravating features could include humiliating circumstances at the time of the arrest or any conduct of those responsible for the arrest or the prosecution which showed that they had behaved in a high-handed, insulting, malicious or oppressive manner either in relation to the arrest or imprisonment or in conducting the prosecution. Aggravating features could also include the way the litigation and trial were conducted.

9 The jury should then be told that if they considered the case was one for the award of damages other than basic damages then they should usually make a separate award for each category. That was contrary to the present practice but would result in greater transparency as to the make-up of the award.

10 Where it was appropriate to award aggravated damages the figure was unlikely to be less than £1,000. It was not possible to indicate a precise relationship between basic damages and aggravated damages because the circumstances would vary from case to case. In the ordinary way, however, the court would not expect the aggravated damages to be as much as twice the basic damages except perhaps where, on the particular facts, the basic damages were modest.

11 It should be strongly emphasised to the jury that the total figure for basic and aggravated damages should not exceed what they considered was fair compensation for the injury which the plaintiff had suffered. It should also be explained that if aggravated damages were awarded, such damages, although compensatory and not intended as a punishment, would in fact contain a penal element as far as the defendant was concerned.

12 Finally, the jury should be told in a case where exemplary damages were claimed and the judge considered that there was evidence to support such a claim, that although the court considered it normally possible to award damages with the object of punishing the defendant, exceptionally that was possible where there had been conduct, including oppressive or arbitrary behaviour, by police officers which deserved the exceptional remedy of exemplary damages. It should be explained to the jury that if the jury were awarding exemplary damages those damages would have already provided compensation for the injury suffered by the plaintiff as a result of the oppressive and insulting behaviour of the police officers. Inevitably, a measure of punishment from the defendant's point of view.

(b) That exemplary damages should be awarded if, but only if, they considered that the compensation awarded by way of basic and aggravated damages was in the circumstances an inadequate punishment for the defendant's conduct.

(c) That an award of exemplary damages was in effect a windfall for the plaintiff and, where damages would be payable out of police funds, the sum awarded might not be available to be expended by the police in a way which would benefit the public. That guidance would not be appropriate if the claim was to be met by insurers.

(d) That the sum awarded by way of exemplary damages should be sufficient to mark the jury's disapproval of the oppressive or arbitrary behaviour but should be no more than was required for that purpose.

13 Where exemplary damages were appropriate they were unlikely to be less than £5,000. Otherwise the case was probably not one which justified an award of exemplary damages at all. The court had to be particularly deserving of condemnation for an award of as much as £25,000 to be justified and the figure of £50,000 should be regarded as the absolute maximum, involving directly officers of at least the rank of superintendent.

14 In an appropriate case the jury should also be told that even though the plaintiff succeeded on liability and in proving conduct of which they found him guilty could reduce or even eliminate any award of aggravated or exemplary damages if the jury considered that that conduct caused or contributed to the behaviour complained of. The figures given would of course require adjusting in the future for inflation. The court appreciated that the guideline figures departed from the figures frequently awarded by juries at the present time. However, they were designed to establish some relationship between the figures awarded in that area and those awarded for personal injuries.

In giving guidance for aggravated damages the court had attached importance to the fact that they were intended to be compensatory and not punitive although the same circumstances might justify punishment.

In deciding upon what should be treated as the upper limits for exemplary damages the court had

selected a figure which was sufficiently substantial to make it clear that there had been conduct of a nature which warranted serious civil punishment and indicated the jury's vigorous disapproval of what had occurred but at the same time recognised that the plaintiff was the recipient of a windfall in relation to exemplary damages.

As punishment was the primary objective in this class of case it was more difficult to fix the amount of exemplary damages to the award of compensatory damages. Indecently aggravated. However, in many cases it could prove a useful check subject to the upper limits the court had identified if it was accepted that it would be unusual for the result of more than three times the basic damages being awarded, as the total of the basic, aggravated and exemplary damages.

The commissioner had submitted that the jury should be invited to take into account the disciplinary procedures which were available against the officers when considering whether the case was one which warranted the award of exemplary damages.

In the court's view that should only be done where there was clear evidence that such proceedings were intended to be taken in the event of liability being established

and that there was at least a strong possibility of the proceedings succeeding.

The court was also not in favour of plaintiffs not co-operating with the disciplinary procedure reducing an award of damages. It was highly desirable that complainants should co-operate in disciplinary investigations but they were not legally obliged to do so. If they were not sufficiently public spirited to do so, that could not be held against them in law so as to reduce the amount payable when assessing the compensation to which they were entitled.

Where a false defence was persisted in that could justify an increase in the aggravated or exemplary damages but so that would almost invariably be the consequence of an unsuccessful defence, the guidance as to figures the court had given took that into account. If a malicious prosecution resulted in a conviction which was only set aside on an appeal that would justify a larger award.

In many cases it would be convenient for the jury's verdict on liability to be taken before they received directions as to quantum.

Solicitors: B. M. Birnberg & Co, Camden; Solicitor, Metropolitan Police.

Christian Fisher & Co, Bloomsbury; Solicitor, Metropolitan Police.

Payment-in notice is not an offer

Gorse and Others v Tinkler

A notice of payment into court made under Order 22 of the Rules of the Supreme Court is not an offer of the amount paid into court that remained after social security payments had been deducted.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Neill, Lord Justice Morris and Sir Iain Gledhill) so held on February 10 when dismissing an appeal by the defendant, Michael Robert Tinkler, from the judgment of Mr Justice Goss in the High Court given in Harpenden District Registry, declaring that the first plaintiff, Richard Robert Gorse, was not bound by any compromise of his action for damages for personal injuries and that the action be allowed to continue.

SIR IAIN GLEDHILL said

that the issue was whether the plaintiff was entitled to continue his action so as to claim a greater amount than the balance of the amount paid into court that remained after social security payments had been deducted.

The defendant, having made the payment in, argued that an agreement at law had been reached comprising the plaintiff's claim. But a notice of payment into court was not an offer capable by its nature of constituting a compromise of an action.

As Lord Justice Goss had said in *Cumber v Pothecary* (1949) 2 KB 58, 67: "It is a wholly procedural matter and has no true analogy to a settlement arranged between the parties out of court, which, of course, does constitute a contract."

Human Rights Law Report

Protection of health justifies conviction

Laskey, Jaggard and Brown v United Kingdom

(Case No 109/1995/615/703-705) Before R. Bernhardt, President and Judges L.-S. Pettit, C. Russo, A. Spielmann, Sir John F. O'Hara, M. A. Lopes Rocha, L. Wildhaber, P. Kirs and E. Levis

Registrar H. Petzold Deputy Registrar P. J. Mahoney [Judgment February 19]

The prosecution and conviction of the applicants for sado-masochistic practices was an interference in their private life which was "necessary in a democratic society".

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) held unanimously, in finding that there had been no violation of article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (1953) (Cmd 8969).

The applicants, Colin Laskey, Roland Jaggard and Anthony Brown, born in 1943, 1947 and 1955 respectively, were members of a group of homosexual men who took part in sado-masochistic activities, involving mutual masturbation and bondage. Those activities were consensual and took place in private between men of full age. The infliction of pain was subject to certain rules, including the use of a code word to call a halt to any activity, and no permanent injury or infection was caused.

The members of the group made videos of those events for private use, and some of those tapes fell into the hands of the police. Laskey, Jaggard and Brown, among others, were charged with a series of offences, primarily causing bodily harm and wounding contrary to sections 47 and 20 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861.

They argued that the content of the alleged "victim's" to the assaults provided them with a defence, but on November 19, 1990 the trial judge ruled that it could not. They subsequently pleaded guilty, and on December 10, 1990 were sentenced, in respect of the offences under the above mentioned sections, to imprisonment of twelve months (Laskey), three years (Jaggard) and two years and six months (Brown).

The applicants appealed. The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeals against conviction but reduced the respective sentences to three months, six months and three months (The Times February 21, 1992, [1992] QB 498). The House of Lords, with two of the five dissenting, dismissed their appeals (The Times March 12, 1993, [1994] 1 AC 212). The majority in the House of Lords took the view that, in general, a victim's consent was no defence to a charge under the 1861 Act and that it would not be in the public interest to create an exception to that general rule to cover sado-masochistic activity.

The proceedings were given widespread press coverage. As a result, all the applicants lost their jobs and Jaggard required extensive psychiatric treatment. Laskey died in 1995.

The application to the European Commission of Human Rights, which was lodged on December 14, 1992, was declared admissible on January 18, 1995 as regarded the applicants' complaint concerning the alleged violation of their right to respect for private life. The remainder of the application was declared inadmissible.

Having attempted unsuccessfully to secure a friendly settlement, the Commission drew up a report on October 26, 1995 in which it established the facts and expressed the opinion by eleven votes to seven that there had been no violation of article 8 of the Convention.

In its judgment, the European Court of Human Rights held as follows:

The applicants complained that their prosecution and conviction had violated their right to respect for their private life under article 8 of the European Convention.

Article 8 "It was common ground before the Court that the criminal proceedings against the applicants constituted an 'interference by a public authority' with their right to respect for private life, that the interference was carried out in accordance with the law" and that

Earlier planning decision prevails

Hammond v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another

Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Brooke and Sir Brian Neill

[Judgment January 30]

The decision of a planning inspector gave rise to an estoppel per rem of a citizen, she submitted that the underlying basis of the estoppel, namely that a judgment in rem had been made by a competent statutory authority was the same whether it was the citizen or the secretary of state or some other statutory authority which sought subsequently to argue that the original determination was wrong.

In his Lordship's judgment, this was a true case of res judicata. Lord Bridge's conclusion in *Thraythwaite* that the determination in favour of an appellant of an appeal against an enforcement notice gave rise to an estoppel per rem judicatum fell to be applied in the present case.

There was therefore a conclusive determination in rem that the use of the land in August 1985 did not give rise to a breach of planning control so far as the use of the mobile home was concerned.

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It appeared to his Lordship that when there were consecutive decisions in rem by statutory authorities the effect of equivalent status the first in time ought to prevail for present purposes. There was no injustice in that because if the first inspector's decision had gone the other way Mr Hammond would have had to take the mobile home off the land 10 years earlier.

Lord Justice Butler-Sloss and Sir Brian Neill agreed. Solicitors: Stephen Fidler & Co, Treasury Solicitor.

Miss Lieven argued that the effect of the decision in *Thraythwaite v Secretary of State for the Environment* (1990) 2 AC

273 was that the first inspector's decision was to be treated as res judicata.

Although that case was concerned with the liability of the secretary of state through the application of the principles of estoppel to seek to re-litigate an issue which had already been conclusively determined in favour of a citizen, she submitted that the underlying basis of the estoppel, namely that a judgment in rem had been made by a competent statutory authority was the same whether it was the citizen or the secretary of state or some other statutory authority which sought subsequently to argue that the original determination was wrong.

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FILM 1

John Travolta's charmed cinematic life comes to an end with the dreadful new Hollywood release *Michael*



FILM 2

The life and times of a female singer-songwriter are the inspiration for the new film *Grace of My Heart*

THE TIMES
ARTS



FILM 3

The theme of love and loss is given a witty and elegant spin in Hal Hartley's latest, *Flirt*



FILM 4

The Phantom is a likeable if unoriginal addition to the list of old serials brought to the big screen

CINEMA: Geoff Brown on the disappointing *Michael* and other new releases. Plus, French festival report

The short and the short of it

Daniel Rosenthal reports on the Clermont Ferrand film festival

When did you last see a short at the cinema? More than a decade has passed since various commercial factors led all but a handful of British screens to stop prefacing the main feature with a short film.

A director's best hope of gaining a large audience for his miniature masterpiece now resides in television, via strands such as Channel 4's *The Shooting Gallery*. Those determined to push their work onto the big screen must head for the burgeoning circuit of international festivals dedicated to shorts, which kicks off, in early February, at Clermont Ferrand, 80 miles west of Lyons.

The city held its first Festival du Court-Métrage in 1979, when Antoine Lopez and Georges Bollon, leading lights in the Clermont Ferrand uni-

Ainsworth, offered us a handsome, chronically depressed 30-year-old whose doting mother tries to snap him out of a suicidal trough by hiring a scriptwriter. With unknown Scott Gibson in the title role, attention was totally bound up in the action, not the actor.

Recognition at Clermont-Ferrand has been a springboard to success for directors such as Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*Delicatessen*) and Mathieu Kassovitz (*La Haine*), yet only two of the 50 films I saw were blatant "Please hire me" calling cards: *Ausgestorben* (Extinguished), by Germany's Michael Pohl, felt like a *Twelve Monkeys* wannabe, and *Le Silence* (The Silence) had an assassin awaiting radio orders for his latest hit — director Fabrice Roudé clearly having spent too much time watching Luc Besson's *Nikita*.

No such genre influences could be detected in *Le Livre de minuit* (The Midnight Book), Thierry Binisti's magical fable about a boy whose readings from the *1001 Nights* save his mother from the Nazis in occupied France; nor in *The Very Stuff*, a spunky debut from Irishwoman Lisa Mulcahy, in which a Lolita-like teenager and her father cause havoc at a rural B&B.

These and other five to 40-minute works from Egypt, Australia, New Zealand and Brazil all



Thierry Binisti's *Le Livre de minuit*

erity film society, programmed a week of shorts. Visiting directors slept at the organisers' digs and 1,200 people watched the films. Lopez and Bollon have remained on the selection committee for an event which now has a £700,000 budget, screens 150 films from 50 countries, and attracts 10,000 spectators in nine days.

French journalists call it "the Cannes of shorts", but the label is misleading. With its makeshift venues (lecture halls doubling as cinemas), young audiences, and resolute artistic focus on largely unknown talent, the festival has more in common with the Edinburgh Fringe.

With most entries in the French and international competitions made for between £10,000 and £40,000, the casts were pleasantly star-free. And this enhanced the conviction of the storytelling. Cleveland Wood's *Last Day on Earth*, a blackly comic gem by Canadian writer/director Andrew

demonstrated independent film-making in its purest form: writers and directors bound by real time and real sources, not star egos or studio executives intent on manufacturing the right "product".

Faced with such tremendous variety, it was disappointing to see the major prizes awarded to a homogenous batch of worthy films. The national Grand Prix went to Jean-Marc Moutout for *Tout doit disparaître* (Everything Must Go), highlighting the plight of France's long-term unemployed. And I could not cheer the International Grand Prix for *One Sunday Morning*, a heavy-handed debut from Britain's Manu Kurewa about a Nigerian asylum-seeker in London fatally refusing to comply with a deportation order.

By favouring political correctness over invention and neglecting the merits of so many more cinematic entries, the jurors were selling both festival and film-makers short.



"A list of commercial ingredients, maudlin indulgences and pre-packaged whimsies": John Travolta in the ill-considered new film *Michael*

Travolta's latest fiction cries out to be pulped

John Travolta leads a charmed life. Left for dead after too many films featuring talking babies and dogs, he joins the Tarantino bandwagon, acts all mean in *Pulp Fiction*, and finds his career resurrected. His earnings skyrocket. People now build films around him, including bad ones like *Michael*, where he makes his first appearance looking seedy, scratching himself, belting out a song, and pushing *Michael* high up the American box-office chart.

Travolta's *Michael* is no ordinary slob. He is an angel, sent from Heaven to the Midwest plains of Iowa, where he first uses his powers to demolish a bank and rescue a widow from financial entanglements. Now, in between gulping booze and pouring cups of sugar over his cereal, he aims to spread love and

harmony among the downcast professionals — two tabloid journalists, one "angel expert" — sent by the sleazy *National Mirror* newspaper to nail his story for page 1.

Even when scruffy and a tad overweight, Travolta still maintains his audience appeal, and can attract the ladies just like *Michael*, who has only to start dancing in a bar before every woman becomes a moth to his flame. But the surrounding story is so ragged, so contrived, that anyone untouched by the man will be rushing headlong towards the cinema exit.

When Frank Capra made the smalltown fantasy of *It's a Wonderful Life*, he gave the film the power of his own convictions. Nora Ephron, the director and co-writer of *Michael*, has no vision to guide her, only a list of commercial ingredients, maudlin indulgences and pre-packaged whimsies, generated perhaps by computer.

Nothing is remotely believable: one situation jostles another in an airless, fake movie universe. Apart from Travolta, William Hurt and Robert Pastorelli survive the best as the journalists with their jobs on the line. Bob Hoskins is loud and boring as the Chicago publisher cracking the whip, while Andie MacDowell shimmers with inadequacy as the sharp-tongued lady who joins in the chase.

The overrated *Sleepless in Seattle*, Ephron's previous hit, at least wrapped some enjoyably tart lines around the rolls of movie tinsel; but if a film as lazy, clumsy and artificial as this can find equal popular appeal, civilisation must be in a more parlous state than I thought.

Retro styling is fashionable in Hollywood, particularly in the music field. A few weeks ago Tom Hanks led us back to the early 1960s to watch the rise and fall of a one-hit band in *That Thing You Do!* *Grace of My Heart* takes us on a longer journey, through the late 1950s, 1960s and into the 1970s in the company of a woman singer-songwriter, played by Illeana Douglas. Her fictional name is Denise Waverly, for a real-life source, you could try Carole King.

She starts out writing songs for others in the Brill Building in New York, home to many budding songsmiths who fuelled the new boom in teenage pop. Gradually she exerts her individuality in a male-dominated business. She goes through one marriage, one

Michael
Odeon West End
PG, 105 mins
Travolta's an angel and the film needs a miracle

Grace of My Heart
Empire, 15, 115 mins
Tuneless ride through the American pop scene

Flirt
Renoir, 15, 80 mins
Hal Hartley's lively diversion

The Phantom
Plaza, 12, 100 mins
Solid, honest comic-strip thrills

talking in circles, is particularly prone to this. But in the intriguing *Flirt*, completed in 1995, he almost makes a virtue of his fondness for repetition.

The film spins three witty and elegant variations on the same story of the heart's affections, of commitment, betrayal and loss. In the first section, conceived as a separate short in 1993, a girl in New York gives her man an ultimatum: make a commitment, or end the relationship. He asks for 90 minutes to think it over, minutes in which he flirts elsewhere, and gets shot in the face. The next section, filmed after funding was found to build the short into a feature, whisks us to Berlin's gay scene (the funding was German), where a similar scenario is repeated. Then, thanks to the Nippon Film Development and Finance, we're off to Tokyo, for a loosely related tale involving one dance student, one choreographer, and a film director called Hal (Hartley himself).

"I always feel more playful with the shorter film," Hartley has said; and you certainly feel his limply high spirits as he turns his scenario upside down, indulges his penchant for non sequiturs and choreographed action, and uses the realities of international funding to fire his imagination.

The first section, featuring Bill Sage, Martin Donovan and rising attraction Parker Posey, is a particular triumph for Hartley's abrupt, off-kilter humour, while a pleasing hint of autobiography colours the last, relaxed episode. Slight though it feels overall, *Flirt* is never negligible.

Back now to the Hollywood mainstream and *The Phantom*, a likeable if unoriginal addition to the hordes of matinee serial and comic-strip thrills regularly emblazoned on the modern screen. The Phantom, incarnated here by Billy Zane, is a healthy, non-sensational type, who leaps around in a figure-hugging purple suit without ever being aware of any sexual overtones.

His business, simply, is fighting evil, in particular members of the dreaded Sengh Brotherhood, who wear spider-web tattoos and yearn to control four ancient skulls with magic powers. It's a hard battle, involving a spectacular leap from a crashing plane on to a conveniently placed horse, a furious chase in Central Park, romantic sparring with Kristy Swanson, chilly encounters with Treat Williams' embryonic dictator and dan-

gerous antics on a volcanic island.

Director Simon Wincer and his team try nothing fancy. They set the tale in the 1930s, adopt a light but never mocking tone, and enjoy making what mayhem they can on a budget far below Steven Spielberg's usual sums. Probably something more spectacular is needed to make an impression with general audiences; but anyone with a fondness for old serials should take *The Phantom* to heart.

SNAP VERDICT

'Cheesy American schmaltz'

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

□ MICHAEL
Damian Samuels, 19: Cheesy and unamusing American schmaltz. Be prepared to vomit.

Tim Thornton, 21: John Travolta really has come on over the years. This is an enthralling romp from start to finish.

Robert Peter Hunter, 20: A nauseating slice of American trivia. Proof that the pie really can have too much sugar.

Peder Jensen, 19: Very entertaining, but you will hate his wings.

□ GRACE OF MY HEART
Damian: A fine film that gives you a chance to see the brilliant John Turturro act alongside Patsy Kensit.

Tim: An intriguing, funny and often charming film. Some good performances, but it lacks the emotional depth it needed at the climax.

Robert: This tale of heartbreak and happiness set against the backdrop of the American pop scene makes for an entertaining but unconvincing melodrama. After failing to live up to its initial promise, it delivers the usual happy ending.

Peder: The theme is a bit boring, but there are a lot of entertaining scenes and some good acting.

□ FLIRT
Damian: A big pile of tedious drivel that is 80 minutes too long. Far better to buy a can of paint and watch it dry.

Tim: I'm afraid that once again director Hal Hartley bored me senseless. A lukewarm plod without even a good explosion at the end. Let me know when it's finished.

Robert: A dull, lifeless trilogy that fails to entertain. I couldn't wait for it to end.

Peder: A really appalling movie. Every time it repeated itself, it became even more clichéd.

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Ridicule

"INTELLIGENTLY flamboyant and beautifully shot - A Triumph!"
— *London Evening Standard*

"VERBAL FIREWORKS and SUMPTUOUS COSTUMES make a FEAST for the senses"
— *London Telegraph*

"BREATHTAKINGLY daring, lavish to look at, finely acted and brilliantly directed"
— *Screen International*

"GLORIOUSLY sharp and intelligent"
— *Barry Norman - Film 97*

A film by PATRICE LECONTE

COURZON WEST END | CHISLEHURST | RITZY | PHOENIX CINEMA

هكذا من لاصح

THEATRE 1

The Young Vic stages an impressive revival of David Mamet's modern masterpiece, *American Buffalo*

THEATRE 2

The treachery of Benedict Arnold is the subject of Richard Nelson's play, *The General from America*

THE TIMES ARTS

COMEDY 1

It was hit and miss in the laughs department when Sandra Bernhard played the Leicester festival

COMEDY 2

... while Frank Kelly, aka Father Jack, brought out too many old favourites in his Dublin stand-up

THEATRE: A worthy revival of Mamet's modern masterpiece on men and morals. Plus, Richard Nelson's latest

Life, the universe and everything

Masterpieces do not have to be big and important and very clearly about the moral nature of the universe. They can involve an old tramp and two brothers or, as here, three petty criminals with rather less than the cumulative skills of the Gang Who Couldn't Shoot Straight. Both Pin-Cory's *Caretaker* and David Mamet's *American Buffalo* look, sound and feel weightless; but they end up tipping your emotional and mental scales more than plays with ten times more obvious avoidance. They seem to involve nothing special, and are actually about

American Buffalo

friendship, betrayal and, yes, the moral nature of the universe. This is the third major revival of *Buffalo* in London and, although Lindsay Posner's production misses a trick or two, it is as well worth seeing as those that brought Jack Shepherd to the National and Al Pacino to the West End. The scene is a Chicago junkshop that, thanks to Joanna Parker's harum-scarum set, makes ordinary tat and muddle look like Christie's on Sunday. Don, the owner, plans to send Bob, his ex-junkie gofer, to break into a coin-collector's house and steal an antique nickel he has sold for what may be too little. But Teach, a hustler on his uppers, persuades Don that he is the more experienced, effective burglar, and robs Bob of his big chance.

So what? When Mamet wrote the play in 1975 he was, he said, "angry about the great and small betrayals and ethical compromises called American business". And it's true that the characters earnestly talk of crime as "business", thereby ridding it of dishonourable connotations and obliquely suggesting that business itself may be a form of crime. But Mamet is not a latter-day Dreiser itching to trim the capitalist jungle. He is more inter-



Bob (Neil Stuke), Teach (Douglas Henshall) and Don (Nicholas Woodeson) in Lindsay Posner's revival of David Mamet's brilliant and touching *American Buffalo*

ested in asking whether friendship, a word much used in the play, is just sentimental cover for opportunism and greed.

That's a good question, for one of the play's successes is its use of the rough, scabrous idiom of Mamet's native Illinois. Language, you feel, is street armour, the means by which people ensure that their front-line emotions go into action

safely camouflaged. To call your victim a four-letter word is to deny him humanity and make fleeing him a positive virtue. Conversely, Teach's more sentimental, sanctimonious diction — "loyalty, you know how I am on this, this is great, this is admirable" — is a way of disorientating, ingratiating, manipulating, and evading threats to his faltering self-esteem.

The burglary is aborted because the ace criminal slated as helper (and Posner quite misses the humour of this) ends up being mugged. But Douglas Henshall's Teach convinces himself that this failure is the result of a conspiracy involving Neil Stuke's fumbling, flummoxed Bob, and gradually he sucks Nicholas Woodeson's genial Don into the dark, paranoid world

he inhabits. Henshall's acting is excellent: comically hyperthyroid, packed with manic energy and febrile anger, but catching the confusion and desperation beneath. The plot is subtle, but the denouement is clear. Bob has not betrayed Don; quite the opposite. The world is not exclusively peopled by cavernous and cannibals, as Teach believes. Affection and

friendship can survive down there, amid the lower depths of Darwinian Chicago. In the most unpretentious of settings Mamet has raised the most basic of questions — do human values exist? — and answered with a cautious, touching, "yes".

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

that a sense of one nation awkwardly in the making and another complacently confident comes vividly across. This is seen most acutely in the contrast between Corin Redgrave's wearily understanding Washington and the British spy, John Andre (Adam Godley), a famous officer promoted beyond his merits because he is the love-object (can this be correct?) of John Woodvine's Sir Henry Clinton. The performances feel right, but something is missing from the play.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Answer to why on Ross

Nick Ross is not the first person who would come to mind if one was asked to guess which broadcaster was storming the carpeted corridors of Broadcasting House, demanding the head of the Controller of Radio 4. But one or two newspaper stories this week have suggested that Ross is about to jump ship, apparently enraged by the "revolution" being proposed by James Boyle, the said Controller. The rumour factory is now working nights and weekends to keep up with Rossery.

My own belief is less exciting. I do not think that Ross has contemplated jumping ship, but I do think that he will vacate the cabin he has occupied for a decade, the one with

RADIO

a brass plate labelled Call Nick Ross on the door. The real reason for Ross's discontentment says much about BBC Radio and, in particular, Radio 4.

For a long time, Ross has wanted more say in choosing the subject of his weekly phone-in. Producers take ultimate responsibility for content, therefore Ross's producer, Anne Peacock, expects to decide the subject, with or without Ross's approval. The recent difficulties arose because Ross wants a heavier, more political content, whereas Peacock believes the programme needs a broad brush. Clearly, Ross has one eye on the coming general election. As soon as that is called, *Call Nick Ross* becomes *Election Call* and Ross will not be presenting that.

Producer-presenter relationships are not easy, and not all of them operate in the same way. Some are more collegial on subject-matter than others. The *Moral Maze* panel, for example, attends a dinner the night before each broadcast with the producer, David Coomes, although it is extremely rare for the subject to be changed so near to transmission.

The Ross kerfuffle is essentially a little local difficulty, which will be resolved this week. Ross will probably say tomorrow that he will leave the show at the end of its present run. Reports that Ross, who will be 50 soon, is miffed at not being considered a political heavyweight at the BBC may have some truth, but the notion that he is a victim of the Boyle era is way off the mark.

A fool and the Radio 4 audience are soon parted, and Boyle is no fool. He has announced a "review" of Radio 4 programming over the next three years, but that is hardly a revolution: change or die is as valid a maxim in radio as elsewhere.

PETER BARNARD

Innocent of solid evidence

The General from America

Barbican Pit

British. For Americans, his name is down in the deepest pit, alongside that of Judas.

Why Arnold resorted to treachery has never been satisfactorily explained, nor does Nelson do so here. In fact, he does less, dramatising some of the circumstances of the man's position (poverty, resentment, a young wife infatuated with English fashion), yet not finding a way to delve

deeply into the murky of his nature. It is not enough to argue that this illustrates the complexity of history. Remembering some of the cool-

ish reviews the play received at its Stratford premiere last summer, I was happily surprised to find how much of this London transfer I enjoyed. Nelson is able to carry his audience in one direction — for instance, allowing us to suspect that the wife (Jo McInnes: good performance) is comically unfaithful — and then abruptly turn the situation around to give us an insight into what has really been

going on. He writes sharply etched scenes to provide a social background, but does not give us Arnold's background.

James Laurence's performance emphasises a blustering element in Arnold, but in what should have been the crucial scene of signing an oath of loyalty he is not given the necessary material. Howard Davies's production does get the balance of performances right, so

COMEDY: Leicester scoops a star who disappoints; plus an Irish generation gap opens up

Easy meat for a bird of prey

When you consider that she started out so explosively as the demented foil to Robert De Niro in *The King of Comedy*, it seems a little depressing that Sandra Bernhard has yet to progress beyond an undemanding supporting role in *Roseanne*.

Surely she was born for better things than that. There is a raw, reckless energy in those jolt-laide features — that face must be one of Mother Nature's early attempts at creating Julia Roberts — and she is a much, much better singer than her old friend, Madonna.

When she appeared at the Festival Hall two years ago, Bernhard came with a full band in tow. This time, flying in for an exclusive appearance at the Leicester Comedy Festival, she was accompa-

Sandra Bernhard
De Montfort Hall,
Leicester

nied only by a keyboard player whose smuggering punctuated every sentence.

His mirth was understandable. Bernhard can be scorchingly funny, especially on her favourite topic of life behind the smoked glass of the celebrity's stretch limo. Too often, though, the humour is dissipated amid ill-focused bouts of sarcasm that alight on the easiest of prey: Tom Cruise, Demi Moore, Liam Gallagher's love-life.

Renaming the Spice Girls the MSG Girls "because they make you dizzy and nauseous" is not exactly the cutting edge of satire. If your



Born for better things: the reckless Sandra Bernhard

target is as trivial as Paula Yates, there is no point in reaching for the napalm.

Her assault on the Courtney Love-Kurt Cobain love affair, executed with anguished segues into A

Taste of Honey, contained much more subtlety. She also enjoyed tweaking her audience's political sensibilities as she dipped a toe into the murky waters of Asian and Jewish stereotypes.

The self-indulgences are all the more frustrating because she is otherwise very adept at exploiting her insider-outsider status. She plays the bratty Hollywood nonconformist — a Ruby Wax with talent and even worse manners — who accepts an invitation to a fancy Beverly Hills party yet regularly slips outside to tell the gawking crowds how crass and slobbish all the stars are. Then, of course, she disappears again, back through the gilded door.

On television later that night Bernhard popped up again, declaring to a chat show host that she is tired of talking about Madonna. Yet on the stage, she was drawn back to that particular subject again and again, mocking her newly acquired English accent and her equally new expenses of cleavage.

At the back of Bernhard's mind, perhaps, there lay the uncomfortable thought that she, and not the Material Girl, was the one playing in Leicester that evening. Life never is fair.

CLIVE DAVIS

Schlock of the old

Frank Kelly
Olympia Theatre, Dublin

come for a winter outing, it was mildly irritating to be told, in mid-February, that it is still almost the festive season, particularly by way of an excuse for wheeling out Kelly's great Christmas hit.

The Twelve Days of Christmas is the comedian's painfully funny story of what happens when a charming Irish girl decides to send all the items mentioned in the Christmas song to her true love, leaving the recipient a broken man and his mother a Valium-chewing alcoholic. An hilarious epistolary account of the ultimate awful Yuletide, the piece has been a pleasure to hear at the end of many years. It is not, however, good for

every occasion. There seems more than a couple of decades, between Kelly's humour and that of younger Irish comedy workers, such as Dylan Moran or Kelly's *Father Ted* co-star, Ardal O'Hanlon. Where the comedy of the younger generation less personally do most of the work, Kelly's relies heavily on jokes with beginnings, middles and ends, often knitted together with the patter of a stiff MC. This would not necessarily be a

problem if the gags were not so obviously topical jokes and spoofs from many years ago. Any comic is making life hard for himself towards the end of the 1990s if he tries to get laughs from the antiquated figure of firefighter Red Adair, and even more bizarrely from the Charismatic Movement — a religious revival at its height about 20 years ago.

Things go little better when Kelly attempts to incorporate something new which makes explicit reference to his *Father Ted* role. The resulting "song" is a strained, uninspired revue number, the creaky nature of which is in no way hidden by the ritual incantation of Father Jack's catchphrases — or rather words — "drink", "girls", or even "arse".

LUKE CLANCY

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CHANGING TIMES

هكذا من رايك

She was a maiden city, bright and free

Michael Levey loses himself among the Renaissance spoils of an Italian architectural jewel

This reviewer's first duty is to issue a warning about some of the photographs of Venice included in this book, beginning with that reproduced on its jacket. They are so explicit in their evocation of the city, and so beguiling therefore, that anyone might pass hours in perusal of them without giving any attention to the text.

That is not intended as a reflection on the author. Indeed, as it happens, the memorable, half-melancholy and wholly appropriate jacket photograph, a view in misty silhouette from the Piazzetta towards the Giudecca and the Church of the Redentore (misidentified as San Giorgio Maggiore) is credited to her.

Her book is subtitled *The Venetian Sense of the Past*, which is not only a closer definition of her theme (since Christianity is also involved) but provides a justification — assuming one is needed — for poring over photographs which support and even add evidence of that sense. Altogether, the book has been most beautifully, and fittingly, designed. What emerges from the skilful combination of words and illustrations is the consistent power of Venice to assimilate spoils from West and East, and — like some aquatic bowerbird — to keep tidying its nest down the centuries well beyond the point, in fact, where this book stops. Thus, visual reinforcement was given to the myth of the city as uniquely marvellous and mysterious.

God-appointed but man-directed, destined to last for eternity. Essential to that concept was its serene, unchanging, republican status and ethos, and it would have helped the general reader to be reminded categorically of how Venice survived intact in 16th-century Italy while Rome was sacked and Florence shortly afterwards cruelly compelled to surrender as a republic and become a Medici dukedom.

The very corporate nature of Venice, where the individual tended to be subsumed in both government and society, is just one of several difficulties Professor Brown's theme confronts. Venice is not the city we think of first in connection with revival of classical antiquity, and then, unlike the gloriously wicked women of late Victorian drama, she

VENICE & ANTIQUITY
By Patricia Fortini Brown
Yale, £45
ISBN 0 300 06900 3

lacked a past — at least in terms of a classical antique past. But it is precisely in the difficulties of the subject where Venice is concerned, the inevitable complexity, and an inherent elusiveness, that Professor Brown has seen — and seized — a brilliant opportunity. Already the author of a book on Carpaccio and narrative painting of his period in Venice, she knows the city well. Some of the fascination of her present work arises from the unexpected, often bizarre, occasionally light-hearted and thoroughly idiosyncratic ways in which antiquity was interpreted and utilised there, adding evidence of what can only be defined as "venezianità".

Perhaps the sheer complexity of the subject caused the



God-appointed but man-directed, destined to last for eternity: Antenor, said to be Venice's founding father — Antenor Founds a City from Guido delle Colonne, *Historia Troiana*

author to approach it from various angles to examine various facets. She ranges very freely, from topics like the consciousness of time to the fabrication of the past for personal or civic purposes, always with an acute eye for the visual implications. Chronologically, as in choice of artefacts, she ranges widely too: from an early relief at Torcello to Sansovino's familiar Loggetta at the base of the campanile of San Marco, and nearby, the exuberant bronze flag pole socket-bases sculpted

by Alessandro Leopardi. Yet, although she compares her approach to a tapestry, the general effect is akin more to a series of samplers in petit-point. No grand, overall sweep is apparent, and the book breaks down into short, detailed essays, all of interest and all of earnest, impressive scholarship, but some distinctly tangential. I detected a certain strain in the introduction of celebrated non-Venetian figures such as Petrarch, Cyriacus of Ancona and Mantegna, and I can't help wonder

whether Jacopo Bellini's sketchbooks display more than a whimsical interest in classical motifs. It seems odd of the author to end her book virtually in mid-Renaissance, with little said about Palladio and not even a glance at one of the greatest pictorial propagators of Venetian myth, the painter also of magnificent recreations of classical mythology, Paolo Veronese.

But Professor Brown deserves to be applauded for successfully bringing many aspects of a challenging theme

into admirably sharp focus. Formidably erudite as her book is, it is lucidly written, consistently stimulating and warmed by unmistakable affection for the city of its title. Literate but non-expert people who share that affection should not fight shy of the book, for reading it can only deepen their feeling. Ultimately, and touchingly, it takes its place as one more among innumerable tributes to the spell Venice casts, has long cast and — let us hope — will long continue to cast.

Far from the married crowd

Rachel Campbell-Johnston

HIS ARMS ARE FULL OF BROKEN THINGS
By P. B. Parris
Viking, £16
ISBN 0 00 07315 2



Frustrated passions: Mew

LITERARY biography is a fashionable industry nowadays. But to recreate the life of a poet as a novel seems a bold project. Reality may indeed be as strange as fiction, but it lacks its tightly structured artifice, the convenient twists of contrivance which tauten a plot. And poets, in particular, make difficult subjects. They have already expressed with uniquely idiosyncratic power the ideas and emotions which clothe a narrative. Perhaps it is telling that Feldege, Fitzgerald, and the fictionalised account of Novalis's life, should have chosen straightforward biography when she came to the poet Charlotte Mew.

P. B. Parris is more daring — or more foolhardy, perhaps. As a culmination of a 15-year fascination for Mew she decides to use this poet's own voice to tell her life story. *His Arms Are Full of Broken Things* is the fictional autobiography of a neglected writer, a tiny bird-like woman, customarily dressed in her father's cut-down clothes, who was described by Virginia Woolf as "the greatest living poetess". Thomas Hardy — with whom she was infatuated — believed her to be the only writer of his times who would be remembered after her death.

Mew's life of bridled and frustrated passions, culminating in her suicide at the age of 50, lends itself to the storyteller's art. Born into the claustrophobic propriety of a Victorian family, she witnessed the slide of her brother and one of her sisters into madness and eventual incarceration in lunatic asylums. She and her remaining sister took a vow never to get married, never to pass their "bad blood" on. Charlotte remained a virgin until the end of her life, finding an outlet for cruelly confused emotions in her exquisitely delicate but ardent verse.

Parris is at her best when recreating Mew's childhood. She captures well the skittering hopscotch imagination and wilful passions of the detached yet rebellious little girl who secretly enlists in wearing scarlet stockings under sensible black boots. But when Parris

turns to Mew's adult life, a tension between a self-conscious concern to explain and to incorporate facts within the necessary fabrications of fiction, jars. Although the novel carefully sketches a portrait of contemporary literary life — the infamous *Little Yellow Book*, bohemian gatherings, and the difficulties encountered by a woman poet fighting for recognition in a male-dominated world — the first person narrative often frays these things unconvincingly.

WHERE Parris is most interesting is where she takes things a step further than Mew's biographer, Penelope Fitzgerald, and surmises that Mew had a love affair with Hardy — albeit an unconsummated one. It is indeed true that Hardy kept a copy of one of her poems on his desk and that Mew visited him and his second wife, Florence, at Max Gate. Parris' copy suggests that much of Hardy's melancholic verse was inspired by his love for Mew, and that she formed a model for Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*.

Though for some this will seem just another brazen assumption in a novel which is already too conjectural, the story of this sad and neglected poet is still moving enough to transcend any awkwardness in the telling and to carry the reader through to the end.

From clothes-horse to Trojan horse

Madeleine Ginsburg

FORTIES FASHION AND THE NEW LOOK
By Colin McDowell
Bloomsbury, £20
ISBN 0 7475 3032 7
THE CUTTING EDGE
Fifty Years of British Fashion
Edited by Amy de la Haye
V&A Publications, £25
ISBN 1 85177 144 8

It is 50 years, almost to the day, since the world press promoted the first post-war fashion *diktat* and the New Look was suddenly upon us. Announced in the spring collections of 1947, it was heralded at the Paris showrooms of Christian Dior by the clang of falling ashtrays, sent flying by the new-style, full-length skirts of swirling models, parading for a fashion press both delighted and aghast at so sudden a departure from austerity to extravagance.

Hem lengths were not the only thing to alter. 1947 saw a boom in the market for all luxury goods and blessed by an increasingly powerful media, a model could change from being a clothes-horse to becoming a Trojan horse — the glamorous promotional front for a variety of industries. Back then, Dior played a fundamental role in the textile mogul Marcel Boussac's burgeoning empire. Today couture is used to promote almost anything from perfumes to paca-macs.

This period in fashion history is examined by two books which accompany the largest historic fashion exhibitions to have been held in London in recent years. For the Imperial War Museum, Colin McDowell has written *Forties Fashion and the New Look*, while *The Cutting Edge: Fifty Years of British Fashion, 1947-1997*, provides the background to the exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Colin McDowell's book

looks back to the 1930s, setting the scene for wartime, make-do-and-mend rationing, and on through to postwar austerity. McDowell explores the foundations for the design breakthrough of the New Look and the euphoric and escapist mood which ensured its acceptance.

Where the book falls down is in its poor referencing to sources. "To make a woman feel better, you must make her feel beautiful" is the last sentence in the book. It is an un sourced quote, and perhaps in 1997 it should remain so, but it is a shame that neither the very readable text nor well-produced pictures are adequately referenced.

Nevertheless, Colin McDowell has ranged widely in telling the story of every woman and her clothes. An experienced international fashion journalist, he is in touch with the woman on the street, the lady in the trade, and passes easily from Bond Street to Seventh Avenue, and the Champs Elysees.

Edited by Amy de la Haye, *The Cutting Edge* looks at the contributions of British fashion and its designers from 1947 to the present day. It examines these under the headings of: new tailoring, romantic dress, bohemian or fanciful styling and country clothes, each of which is the subject of an article by different authors. The clear and comprehensive introduction by Ms de la Haye defines the categories and sets current British fashion in its social, economic, administrative and educational context. Designers as diverse as Norman Hartnell, Hardy Amies, Mary Quant, Zandra Rhodes, Jean Muir, Vivienne Westwood and Tommy Nutter are interviewed.

Accessories, hats, handbags, shoes and underwear also have their space. But the chapters are perhaps too brief



Make-do-and-mend: the ration book, an essential part of wartime couture (1944)

for the diversity of the subjects, resulting in a rather simplistic inventorial approach. The book is also a little blinkered with regards to influences from overseas: the Italian contribution to shoe and handbag design, for example, deserves comment, as does the American contribution to underwear design, which has been unduly marginalised.

It is very much the book of the exhibition, and the high quality illustrations are an anthology of the late 20th-century museum collections — both fashion illustrations and photography as well as fashion and textiles.

The original aim of the V&A was to improve the standard of national taste and, of course, the demand for ex-

ports. Over the past 50 years British designers have popped on and off the world fashion stage. It is a happy thought that the publication of this book coincides with the career move of two of the finest young British designers in the world today: Galliano to Dior and McQueen to Givenchy. Both of them "buy British" — may they not be the last to do so.

A Good Book but lacking in family values

John Polkinghorne

IN THE BEGINNING
By Karen Armstrong
HarperCollins, £14.99
ISBN 0 00 028114 5

THE subtitle proclaims this to be a new reading of the Book of Genesis. It will certainly be so for those whose impressions are derived from picture books of Noah's Ark or from Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat (alas, as here, translated as a robe with long sleeves). For those with a closer acquaintance with this compilation of ancient stories, occurring in a variety of versions, combined but imperfectly reconciled by the eventual editors, there will be less occasion for surprise. Genesis is powerful, primal, patriarchal. It is quite often morally questionable, as Marjorie pointed out in the 2nd century. As in any account of divine election, survival without God's

choices can seem strange and arbitrary. Genesis is not a book full of illustrations of good "family values": think of Jacob and Esau, or Joseph and his brothers. The book has about it a good deal of the unidiness and strangeness of life.

Armstrong takes the reader through all this in a sequence of short chapters.

She tells the stories at face value, with some *four* narrative and mechanism resulting at times. The meat of this 20th-century reading lies in the comments that accompany the stories, which are nearly always interesting and often insightful. The stance is heavily influenced by Jung and particularly by the latter's belief in the "shadow side" of God. Armstrong writes: "One of the problems of monotheism has been its reluctance to accept evil in the divine." She makes use of the Jewish idea of the *yetzer ha'ra*, the evil inclination that the rabbis saw as part of God's creation (just as Satan, in Job, is part of the heavenly court). A contemporary

Christian reading would have had to wrestle with all the problems that Armstrong brings out so clearly, but it would have made different responses to them. Part of that response would have involved a greater acknowledgement of the effects of the historical and cultural settings of the writings, and part a refusal to read Genesis as a separate book, divorced from the rest of scripture.

One third of the text is taken up by reprinting a translation of Genesis, presumably just in case the reader did not know where to find it.

John Polkinghorne's latest book, *Beyond Science*, is published by Cambridge University Press and costs £12.95.

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Larger than life: Jeanette Winterson enjoys the epistolary quirks of an eccentric English poet

Not a mother to Marilyn

When I am told by left-wing boys that I can't write poetry because I have no proletarian experiences, I often wonder how many of them, at the age of 17, have been sent to pawn false teeth — parental false teeth!"

Edith Sitwell was a mouthpiece of English poetry for 40 years. Until her death in 1964, she recited, she lectured, she broadcast, she harangued, and she declaimed her famous 1923 poem, *Facade*, through a megaphone.

Everything about Edith was amplified: her height, she was six feet tall; her ancestry, there had been Sitwells at Renishaw Hall, Derbyshire, since 1660; her family, her brothers Osbert and Sacheverell were as conspicuous as she; her dress, flowing robes and outsize jewellery; her intensely dramatic friendships; and her work, which received a great deal of attention, much of it hostile.

These letters do not reveal Edith at her normal size according to the popular idea of the person versus the myth, rather they inscribe her peculiarly Alice-in-Wonderland character of one who seems to shrink away to nothing, only to tower over surroundings a moment later. This combination of vulnerability and dominance made her friends love her. To her critics it was all part of the sham.

She had plenty of critics: Geoffrey Chaucer, Julian Symonds (who pursued her literally to death's door), F.R. Leavis, of whom she wrote with good humour: "Hot water is my natural element as far as Dr Leavis is concerned."

For a while Stephen Spender derided her work, and she said of him: "When he is not sentimental he is hysterical." Her collection, *Street Songs*, which included the tremendous 1941 war poem, *Still Falls the Rain*, won him to her, and during the war they became fast friends, he supporting her work and she knitting for his baby.

Opinions about Edith Sitwell's work were, and are still, rather mixed. Edith loved to do battle with what she called the "pipsqueaks", and she was

regularly aided in her sallies by her brothers, even to the extent of running a libel suit against a journalist who was forced to pay damages for implying that the Sitwells were of no further interest.

Her fighting spirit sprung out of the simple sense of justice that caused her to arm herself on behalf of anyone she felt was being given a rotten deal. What is clear and surprising from the letters is how tirelessly Edith worked for anyone she believed in. Dylan Thomas and William Walton are well known but there were many now obscure people whom Edith took to heart, usually by sending them money when she knew she couldn't afford it.

There is a lot in these letters about money. Her mother, Lady Ida, was sent to Holloway for a few weeks on charges of forgery, while Edith herself, in the 1950s, went to Hollywood to earn a fortune.

The fortune did not materialise but Marilyn Monroe did, much to the delight of the press, with whom Edith was furious as usual: "One of their lower grade mental defectives rang up and asked: 'Is Miss Monroe going on the same boat as you to England?' A Calcutta paper says I live 'only to be a mother to Miss Monroe'."

Maternal feeling was not Edith's strong suit. On a memorable train journey, she wrote: "The whole train was a shrieking howling whistling mass of infant imbeciles. As you know, I haven't the unnatural love of children that affects some women. By the time I arrived I was longing for another Herod."

Her own childhood had been loveless and bizarre. Her father had wanted a male heir, her mother, only 18, had wanted no child at all. Edith, who was gawky, was locked up at night in a steel body-cage designed to correct her spine. Growing up, she found her mother distant and her father tyrannical. In early instructions about her funeral, she directed: "Please see to it that I am cremated." The other thing would be too much like living with father.

Amusing, painful, these letters are very entertaining.

SELECTED LETTERS OF EDITH SITWELL

Edited by Richard Greene
Virago, £20
ISBN 1 85041 235 X



Death to the pipsqueaks: Edith Sitwell armed herself on behalf of anyone she felt was being given a rotten deal (1960)

many have not been published before, and they give the reader a great hubbub of life, literary and cultural, in London and Paris, from Modernism to Beat poetry.

The problem with the book is a scanty introduction, no biographical details at all and no chronology of Edith Sitwell's life or her work. There is no bibliography, no list of Sitwell work in print, nothing to help the curious reader to find his/her way. Victoria Glendinning's biography, *A Unicorn Among Lions*, should be recommended, not out of earnestness but for pleasure. There is so much fun and fight in Edith Sitwell and her work that it would be a pity to miss any of it.

NICHOLAS TODD, the narrator of *Fear of the Dog*, is a lawyer-turned-artist living in the proverbial garret where it is always either freezing or baking. Tony Acton is his dealer — well-off, flamboyant, oozing charm and, from page one, the villain of the piece. Why is it always the dealer who is the bad guy in art thrillers? One or two real-life artists have been, shall we say, less than perfect (Fra Lippo Lippi, Caravaggio, Domenichino, for example) and it would be refreshing to have a change from this all too familiar scenario.

Tidmarsh's strength in this book is the clarity and simplicity of his writing. He knows

Stranger than fact? Dirty dealings in the art world

Peter Watson

FEAR OF THE DOG
By Neil Tidmarsh
Signet, £5.99
ISBN 0 451 18933 7

when to leave a sentence well alone, when you do and do not need adverbs, how much description is just enough.

The weakness — fatal, in my view — stems from the fact that it is written in the first person. Since it is the narrator who is in deadly combat with the villain, the outcome is never in doubt (he must win in order to write the book), there is no tension even when the most dreadful things are hap-

pening to Todd, and the subtitles have fizzled out so long before that the ending is rather empty.

Todd decides to kill Acton

on page one but the plot goes horribly — disastrously — wrong. The deaths in the book are original and suitably gory and the set-up is admirably meticulous. However, insofar as the twist in the tale removes the romantic element, our interest levels off at the very point when it ought to be taking wing.

There is less art background than you might expect, the author obviously being more

interested in characterisation than chiaroscuro. There is nothing wrong with that, but it does mean that the promise of the book's blurb, to take us into "the darkest depths of London's art world", could not be further from the truth.

What we have here is a well-written novel with deep structural faults — an unthrilling thriller, an amputated (and therefore ultimately disappointing) love story, and a villain who is too bad to be true, given Mr Tidmarsh's obvious intelligence.

I suspect he has set his sights too low and should be more ambitious next time. Peter Watson's book *Saturn's* is published by Bloomsbury at £20

Paying for it in sweat

READING Chris Matthews's engaging account of the rivalry between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon is like sitting in the back of a bar with an old-fashioned Irish politician, listening to vintage campaign stories that grow more pungent with age.

Matthews doesn't spend much time trying to deliver on his subtitle: he's not one to confect weighty speculations about how the two men's lifelong competition "shaped postwar America". As a former Democratic political operative himself, Matthews is more intent on bringing to life Kennedy and Nixon as working politicians — men in the arena, as Theodore Roosevelt put it.

In that ambition, he delivers very ably. Matthews is a good companion with a knack for the telling detail and the bright turn of phrase. From the start, he displays a clear sense of his protagonists. The rivalry between Kennedy and Nixon, he aptly writes, pits "a Mozart against a Sailer". Kennedy was the golden boy of postwar American life, a man who conquered all worlds — from politics to the bedroom — and all without ever apparently breaking a sweat. Nixon always seemed to be sweating, with exertion, anxiety, envy. "If Americans viewed John F. Kennedy as their shining hero," Matthews writes, "they also recognised the five o'clock shadow of Richard Nixon in the fluorescent light of their bathroom mirror."

In fact, as Matthews shows, Nixon and Kennedy had more in common than met the eye. As second World War veterans, both were elected to Congress in 1946. Until Kennedy narrowly bested Nixon in the 1960 presidential campaign, the two considered themselves friends. Both were fierce Cold Warriors; both were convinced that politics was the conduct of war by other means;



Nominees Kennedy and Nixon make ready for battle (1960)

Ronald Brownstein

KENNEDY & NIXON
The Rivalry that Shaped Postwar America
By Christopher Matthews
Simon & Schuster, £16.99
ISBN 0 684 81830 1

both were disdainful of the liberal press and social establishment they found in the capital.

Yet they came to that shared contempt from divergent perspectives that shaped their lives throughout. Born to wealth, Kennedy had the cool contempt of a conqueror: he could disdain the Establishment because he had seen its pretensions and frailties from the inside. Nixon — the southern California boy forced to turn down his scholarship to Harvard because his parents couldn't afford the room and board — was forever the outsider pressed against the glass, burning with resentment.

Kennedy was liberated by his disdain. Nixon imprisoned. Kennedy ruthlessly pursued his personal ambitions and political goals, unimpaired by anyone. Nixon was just as relentless, but he was a prisoner of his own resentments — a rage against his political enemies that ultimately consumed him in

the Watergate scandal. Probably more words have been written about Kennedy and Nixon than any other modern American leaders, and Matthews inevitably reploughs some well-worn ground. But through interviews and industrious digging in the archives, he has found fresh material that illuminates his familiar characters from new angles. Particularly moving is an exchange of letters after Nixon invited Jacqueline Kennedy and her two young children back to the White House for the first time in years: "You will always be welcome in This House," Nixon wrote to young John Kennedy after leading him through the office where he had once famously played under his father's desk.

Yet the man capable of that tenderness also sought to place spies on the secret service detail assigned to the last Kennedy brother — Teddy — in the hopes of discovering a personal indiscretion that would destroy him. Nixon may indeed be a tragic figure, but he is one who fully earned his disgrace. In American iconography, the common sense of the common man always trumps the airs of the elite. This story inverts that folk wisdom. John Kennedy, heaven knows, had his ethical blindspots too; but in the end, the reliable moral compass that a more reliable moral compass than the champion of the silent majority.

Three weddings and a funeral

Ann Thwaite

VICTORIAN GIRLS
Lord Lytton's Daughters
By Sheila Fletcher
Hambledon Press, £25
ISBN 1 85285 150 3

"The girls are subdued, vague and sweet," Peter Quennell wrote 60 years ago in *Victorian Panorama*, describing a typical family photograph, and so the four Lytton girls look in *The Old Dozen*, the portrait of the 4th Lord Lytton's 12 children by his first wife. The boys, on the other hand, look arrogant and careless, lounging around, legs crossed, hands in pockets. They would grow up to include a bishop, a general, and Head Master of Eton and a Cabinet minister. (This last was Alfred, the baby of the group, and most brilliant of all.) The three girls who survived became wives, and two of them mothers. What else was there after all, as George Eliot said of Dorothea Brooke, that they could have done? Their role was "to succour and advance the men".

Sheila Fletcher has transformed a mass of almost entirely unpublished papers (mainly letters and diaries from the Lyttons, Talbot and Gladstone families) into a readable narrative, which confirms just how much young women, however clever and strong-minded, were limited by the expectations and conventions of their time. One of the ironies of the book, to which Sheila Fletcher draws attention in her preface, is that Lord Lytton, who in 1869 headed the Endowed Schools Commission and was instrumental in establishing the first grammar schools for girls, gave his daughters just the sort of "slipshod" education which he officially castigated. "How it makes me gnash my teeth not knowing Greek!" Lucy said to her father,



To succour the men: *The Old Dozen*, Lord Lytton's children outside Hagley Hall (circa 1860)

who was in the habit of translating Milton into Greek lambics on the hunting field.

The boys went from Eton to Cambridge. The girls left the schoolroom as soon as they were 17; after that it was up to them as far as serious things were concerned. They went on with dancing, singing and Italian lessons, and a certain amount of doing good. But it was the country visits and the London seasons which mattered most, intended to match the girls with suitable husbands.

Much of the book is concerned with the affairs of the girls' hearts. Both Meriel and Lavinia married Talbots, close family friends. Lucy's bridegroom was Lord Frederick Cavendish, second son of the Duke of Devonshire. For many readers the shadow of the "Phoenix Park murders" will inevitably

hang over their happiness. The shadow for Lucy herself was the fact that the marriage was childless. Meriel ended up with ten. When her twins were born ("the poor little unwelcome couple" Lucy called them), Lytton admitted "a wish that it may be put a stop to". As for Lucy, she would live alone for another 43 years after Lord Frederick was hacked to death on the very day he arrived in Dublin, sent by Lucy's uncle, William Gladstone, as Secretary of State for Ireland.

At 17, Lucy had written in her diary: "Oh, the deep sadness of the flying oars." Death is a constant presence in the book, although May, the third sister, was the only one who died young. Their mother had died not long after Alfred's birth, and one by one the girls tried to take her place at

the heart of the family, running Hagley (their house in Worcestershire), worrying over servants and brothers. Eventually Lytton married again, which caused more and different problems. "He never would teach me anything," the second wife said, yet tributes on his death were above all to "the services Lord Lytton rendered to the cause of the education of women". His suicide, and the shocking manner of it, is the most surprising thing in the book.

The Lyttons were more conventional than their Gladstone cousins. None of the women would justify a whole biography as Mary Gladstone would. All the same, there is a great deal in this study to reward our curiosity.

Ann Thwaite's book *Emily Terenure: The Peet's Wife*, is published by Faber at £25

British head for hills as sterling's rise continues

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT

THE continuing strength of the pound has led to a resurgence in holiday bookings to the mountains of France and the traditional ski resorts of Austria and Switzerland.

As Britain's inbound tourist numbers plunge because of sterling's rise, those heading abroad for their holidays are cashing in on increases of up to 25 per cent in their spending power. Thomson reports that bookings for summer breaks in the Austrian lakes and mountains have gone up by 48 per cent compared with last year and Inghams has had to add flights to cope with a 25 per cent leap in demand.

Andrew Russell of Inghams says: "Dramatic expansion in this particular market is virtually unheard of. But the current exchange rates mean that Britons get more Austrian schillings and Swiss francs for their money, and that is one of the reasons that sales are strong this year."

He says that the general improvement in the British economy and some of the best snow conditions for many years have also boosted the number of people heading for the mountains. He adds: "A lot of people who would take only one winter sports holiday in a season are squeezing in a second, or even a third."

David Hearn of the Ski Club of Great Britain says conditions are now "pretty wonderful" throughout the Alps. "There has been a lot of snow in the last week and it is snowing heavily in Austria until lunchtime," he says. "News of these superb conditions is filtering through, and those who may have been put

off by indifferent conditions on the lower slopes in Austria are now going."

Even low-level pistes will now remain open until Easter, he predicts, and higher-level slopes "might stay open as long as they want".

In the past 12 months the pound has strengthened sharply so that it now buys SwFr2.32 compared with only 1.84 last year, a 26 per cent change. The Austrian schilling is 20 per cent cheaper, at 16.96 to the pound, compared with 15.86 a year ago, and the French franc is 9.10, compared with 7.74 in 1996 — an 18 per cent change.

Pascal St Pierre, the French Government Tourist Office's director, says the number of direct inquiries made to the London headquarters have leapt by 21 per cent compared with the same time last year. "The turnaround is remarkable," he says. "In January last year we had 10,500 phone inquiries but this year they have risen to 12,700."

"We are getting the same feedback from tour operators, who all claim that bookings are well up compared with last year. Cities are even cheaper than they were last year because of the involvement of Britany Ferries in marketing them and because the value of the pound to France is rising all the time."

Thomson says that late bookings are now finding perfect conditions on the pistes and good value for money in the restaurants and cafes near favourite resorts.

At this time last year, a Coca-Cola cost the equivalent of £1.57 in Austria, £1.04 in

France and £1.73 in Switzerland. This year the prices have fallen to £1.31, 87p and £1.37 respectively. A glass of wine, which last year cost £1.89 in Austria, £1.67 in France and £2.71 in Switzerland is now, according to Thomson, £1.58, £1.42 and £2.15 in Soll, Val Thorens and Verbier respectively.

Even more noticeable is the reduction in the price of food. A two-course meal in France will now cost an average of £10.98 compared with £12.91 a year ago, and a hot main course in Switzerland has dropped from £8.15 to £6.46.

Steve Carley, commercial director of Thomson, says: "The exchange rate has had a very significant effect on people's decisions about where to go. A family of four might easily have had to spend, for example, £100 on a single meal in Switzerland last year. The bill for the same meal would be £25 lower this year and that is an important saving indeed."

Tour operators will soon be buying their foreign currency for next winter's holidays, which they will then use to pay for hotel or chalet accommodation. If the present trend continues, they will be able to make huge savings compared with this winter, whatever happens to exchange rates in the meantime.

This in turn will mean that many brochure prices will be lower next year than this — a move spotted by thousands of canny holidaymakers from the UK, who have already boosted bookings for both the coming summer and next winter.



Better roads, hotels and air services have helped to make Tanzania a more popular destination for Britons

Zimbabwe falls from favour

BY TONY DAWES

ZIMBABWE is losing its appeal and being replaced by Zambia and Tanzania as favourite offbeat African holiday destinations, according to a survey this week by Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions.

The company, which offers exotic and adventurous holidays to Asia and the Americas as well as Africa, also reports a fourfold increase in bookings to Peru with Costa Rica and the Galapagos Islands gaining in popularity.

Just as England's cricketers lost their enthusiasm for Zimbabwe on a disastrous tour earlier this winter, so too are British holidaymakers — but for different reasons.

Nick Van Gruisen, the managing director of Worldwide Journeys, says: "While the players found the country strange and bewildering, tourists are finding it's not wild enough. Wonderful places like the Victoria Falls are being swamped with tourists flowing in on charter flights and the

country has also become more expensive.

"People who regularly travel long-haul are looking for something even more unusual or adventurous than their last trip. So those who have visited Zimbabwe or Botswana are now looking at Tanzania or Zambia, while people who traditionally travelled east for adventure are starting to discover Peru, Costa Rica and the Galapagos Islands."

Van Gruisen also reports a growing trend to combine adventure with a few days' relaxation on the beach, with tourists who visit southern Tanzania, for example, mixing game viewing and bushwalking in Selous and Ruaha National Parks with three days in a luxury resort on the coast.

Bill Adams, chairman of the African Travel and Tourism Association, says that better roads, hotels and air services have helped to make Tanzania

and Zambia more popular destinations.

"In real terms," he adds, "holidaying in Tanzania today costs no more than a decade ago, but tourists benefit from much higher quality holidays and a dramatically improved infrastructure, especially in the south. In Zambia, big developments in internal air services have made a lot of areas, which were difficult to reach, more accessible."

Adams, the director of Safari Consultants, adds that Botswana is losing popularity because of increased prices, the recent boom in travel to South Africa is levelling out and Kenya is making a comeback as discerning holiday-makers discover places which the package tours miss out.

"We are seeing more and more people wanting to choose their own itineraries and stay in small exclusive lodges such as Tortilis and Ol Donyo Wuas in Kenya and

Tongabesi in Zambia," says Nigel Vere Nicoll, chief executive of Wild Africa Safaris.

Outside Africa, Mr Van Gruisen reports that Peru is becoming more popular because its fabulous Inca sites and breathtaking scenery remain relatively unspoilt. He says: "The Galapagos Islands are also attracting more tourists as they realise they can play catch with the sea turtles, swim with sharks and discover equally wonderful creatures and plants on land."

Just as Kenya is regaining popularity in Africa, Nepal is back as a top Asian destination, according to the Worldwide Journeys boss. "The country suffered from a view that too many tourists were spoiling its greatest attractions and that it was politically unstable," he says.

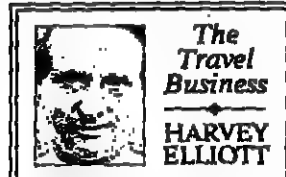
"But tourists are beginning to recognise that nowhere else in the world can you trek at 9,000ft, go white-water rafting and visit the wonders of Kathmandu Valley."

Flyers deserve greater safety

I am not a nervous flyer but I know that many airline passengers harbour terrible fears. Recent official reports and statistics may give them good cause. Last year was the worst for fatal airline accidents. There were 57 crashes in which 1,840 people died — 40 more than in 1985, which was the previous worst on record.

There are, of course, caveats. Of the 57 fatal accidents, 45 involved airlines registered in what are known as "developing economy" countries. So that part of the world which carries about 12 per cent of the world's airline traffic produced 80 per cent of the accidents. Twenty of the crashes involved freight, or other operations not involving passengers. But still the total number of accidents and deaths is rising. And many more aircraft are in the skies now than ever before.

In the latest issue of *The Log*, the journal of Balsa, the pilots' union, Bill Archer, the union's vice-chairman, voices his disquiet over "a black year for aviation safety". He wor-



The Travel Business HARVEY ELLIOTT

ries that the era when safety was of paramount importance, regardless of cost, may be ending and that "today's demand for cheap travel, political objectives or deregulation, privatisation, competition and profit all compete with investment in safety and change the very bedrock upon which the industry was born and has developed."

If Mr Archer, a senior BA Boeing 747 training captain and leader of all Europe's commercial pilots, is worried, is it any wonder his passengers are also worried?

His concerns also echo those of the Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) which has recently criticised a string of maintenance errors that almost led to disaster.

Now it reports that a Boeing 737 approaching Heathrow was thrown into a violent 50-degree roll by the wake from a Boeing 767 it was following at a distance of more than six miles. This exceeded the normal five-mile separation limit and must make one question how close together aircraft can safely fly. Yet as the landing rate at main airports increases, pressure is mounting to force aircraft ever closer.

There have been too many similar worrying incidents. And as the skies get busier and accountants tighten their control, the need for more dispassionate vigilance becomes urgent. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the AAIB are held in international high regard for their expertise and for persuading others to act swiftly to prevent any potential safety problem from becoming reality.

However, the CAA has become little more than a cog in a single European-wide safety organisation. Now it must wait for the slowest of the 26 countries that are members of the European Joint Aviation Authorities to agree to some new demand, rather than act unilaterally — and therefore quickly.

There may be powerful arguments in favour of a single European safety body. But passengers must have trust in its ability to act quickly, effectively and without a whisper of corruption. This time next year, that upward graph of airline accidents must be seen to be heading down. The CAA and the AAIB must show their independence and, if necessary, force others in Europe's ponderous safety "club" to follow.

Bookings heavy for early Easter ski and sun trips

BY TONY DAWES

EASTER holidays are rapidly selling out but those looking for a travel boom continues and Britons plan a break in the sun or on the ski slopes to cheer themselves up during the gales sweeping the nation.

Leading travel agents and tour operators all report that Easter bookings are ahead of last year and that people still wanting to travel cannot be choosy about dates and destinations. Some are even recommending that families book a May Bank Holiday break rather than rely on getting what they want at Easter.

Thomson, Britain's largest holiday company, says it has sold 90 per cent of its Easter programme, and destinations including Florida, the Caribbean and the Canary Isles are almost completely booked up.

Cosmos reports that it has sold far more Easter holidays than at the same time last year while the high street travel agents Going Places and Lunn Poly also advise those still planning a holiday to book as quickly as possible.

Andrew Windsor, the director of retail operations at Thomas Cook, says: "With rigid school holiday dates in place, most people have already taken advantage of the discounts available earlier in the year."

A Thomson spokeswoman says: "Easter is always a very popular time especially for family holidays, but this year is proving exceptional. Some pockets of Spain and the Mediter-

anean are still available but for those looking for a holiday in the Canaries, only a flight from Manchester to Tenerife on Easter Sunday remains, while for the Caribbean only some flights from Gatwick to the Dominican Republic are still on offer."

Lunn Poly confirms that the Canary Islands and Florida are popular with people snapping up sunshine breaks but the UK's largest travel agency still has some Easter holidays available to these destinations.

They include a fortnight's First Choice self-catering holiday in Tenerife for £1,680 for a family of four and a fortnight in Florida with Unifit in a hotel close to Disney World for £1,948 for a family of four. Both holidays start with flights from Gatwick on March 21.

Tropical Places reports that few seats are left on its long-haul holidays over Easter but it still has space on a fortnight's all-inclusive holiday to the Rex Grenadian Hotel, Grenada, costing £1,269 a person with a flight from Gatwick on March 19. A fortnight at the Frigate Bay Hotel on the unspoilt Caribbean island of St Kitts is also available for £229 with a flight from Gatwick on March 24.

Tony Bennett, Going Places managing director, says: "Easter is so early this year that it is still possible to take a winter skiing break over the holiday and it also fits in with people wanting a late winter sunshine break."

Discounts halted

BY STEVE KEENAN

BRITAIN'S second biggest travel agency is ending discounts on summer holidays because of a boom in bookings. Going Places will stop discounts of up to 10 per cent from Monday after industry figures showed that sales are up by one third on last year.

There are 8.5 million package holidays on sale this year from tour operators, the same number as in 1996. By February 15, about 4.2 million had been sold, compared with 3.3 million at the same time last year. Going Places, which has 715 travel shops, said the

demand for summer holidays meant there was no further need to offer discounts. Tony Bennett, the managing director, said: "We have said all along that the market is ahead and capacity is going to be tight, so there is no need to carry on discounting like this."

The biggest travel agent, Lunn Poly, and its rivals refused to say whether they would copy Going Places' tactics. But if rivals do not follow the lead, it is expected that Going Places will revert to discounting through fear of losing market share.

BA ends walk-on guaranteed seat for shuttle flights

BY DAVID CHURCHILL

BRITISH AIRWAYS is planning to scrap its 21-year-old "turn up and go" guarantee on shuttle flights from the middle of next month as part of a thorough overhaul of its domestic services, the biggest for a decade.

The moves include the introduction of electronic ticketing, more scheduled services and improvements to aircraft and terminals. But they have already been sharply criticised by a leading business travel agent as likely to cause "confusion and inconvenience" for many travellers.

Jim Tweedie, the director of client services for Carlson Wagonlit Travel, said: "The end of the well-established system whereby travellers could simply turn up at the airport and be guaranteed a seat on the shuttle will inconvenience many business travellers, who often have to change their flight at the last minute. This, in addition to the other changes being made, will cause a degree of confusion as well as lead to higher costs for the corporate traveller from the extra work involved."

BA said that the decision to end the guaranteed seat on shuttle flights to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester and Belfast after 21 years was made because 80 per cent of

shuttle seats were already booked in advance.

In addition, the airline said that bigger aircraft and more frequent services meant that most passengers were likely to get the flight of their choice.

From March 12, all shuttle seats will have to be booked in advance, although anyone who turns up at the airport may still be able to get onto a flight if space is available.

Mr Tweedie added: "But it means for the popular business flights at certain times of the day, many executives will not be able to get on if they leave it too late to book."

BA is also phasing out its popular Timesaver tickets which enable regular shuttle travellers effectively to "write their own ticket" for a domestic flight. However, it has responded to pressure from Carlson and agreed to end this from April 30 rather than March 12 as planned.

The overall changes being introduced by BA are part of the move towards total "ticketless travel" on its domestic and possibly European flights. In addition to investment in new electronic ticketing machines, the overhaul, budgeted to cost £10 million, includes more scheduled flights from Gatwick, upgraded aircraft and improved lounges at regional airports.



Kashmir is one of the places the FCO advises against

Britons, stay away

FOURTEEN countries and millions of square miles of the Earth's land surface have effectively been put out of bounds to British travellers.

The Foreign Office (FCO) now advises against travel to 14 countries and says that another six should be visited only "on an essential basis". A combination of civil war, famine, lawlessness and overt threats against foreigners has led the FCO to "advise against all travel" to countries from Africa to the Pacific.

British travellers, whether on business or pleasure, should avoid: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bougainville Island off Papua New Guinea, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Chechen Republic, Iraq, Iran, India, Kivu in Zaire, Liberia, Somalia, Tajikistan and Western Sahara. The

FCO also warns travellers to go to Angola, Bosnia, Lesotho, Rwanda, east and southern Turkey and Zaire only if their business is essential.

A Foreign Office official comments: "All we can do is advise British nationals; we cannot prevent them from visiting these places if they so wish. But adequate insurance to cover all possible contingencies is absolutely essential."

Obtaining insurance cover for visits to countries on the FCO list is, of course, difficult.

The Association of British Insurers says: "Insurance companies do not expect people to put themselves into the line of fire. It may be possible to find someone prepared to cover you for a particular trip to one of the countries on the list, but it would be very expensive and would require the help of a specialist agency."

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Pienaar pledges to honour his Saracens contract

own return to the national team. "I am a very loyal person and the people here at Saracens have shown great faith in me," he said. "I intend to repay that."

No successor as South Africa's coach is likely to be named until next week, though the *Sarfu management committee* has already begun to look for a replacement by the appointment tomorrow. At the same time, union officials are to meet Steve Tshwete, the Minister for Sport, to discuss the terms of a government investigation into Sarfu finances. A dossier has been prepared by Brian van Rooyen — who stood against Louis Luyt for the post of Sarfu president last year — alleging mismanagement over sponsorship and television deals.

The management of the British Isles, who tour South Africa this summer, have brought forward the meeting

he received playing for Ireland last Saturday. Will Johnson stands by.

Stuart Potter, the centre, may also withdraw from the Leicester team after suffering whiplash in a road accident. Craig Joiner, the Scotland wing, will replace him, having recovered from a long-standing injury.

One day after being left out of the Scotland squad to face Ireland, Scott Hastings has now been ignored by the A team selectors. Derek Stark and Ronnie Eriksson, who were also dropped from the full squad, are included.

SCOTLAND A: D Lee (Westmeath); J Craig (West of Scotland); C Murray (Leitch); R Edmondson (London Scottish); J McCall (London Scottish); G Curran (Barns); D Burns (Westmeath); G Graham (Newcastle); G Sutherland (West of Scotland); J McCall (London Scottish); J Campbell (Aberdeen); G Graham (Newcastle); S Holmes (London Scottish); C Hogg (Aberdeen).

□ Jim Glennon, the former international lock, will manage the Ireland squad in the Under-19 World Cup tournament in Argentina between March 22 and 31.



Enqvist joins string of fallen seeds

TIM HENMAN, the Great Britain No 1, was one of only three surviving seeds in the European Community championship in Antwerp after the defeat last night of Thomas Enqvist, of Sweden, who went down 6-4, 6-7, 3-6 to Francisco Clavet, of Spain.

Enqvist, the No 3 seed, who won the Marseilles tournament last weekend, was on court for little more than two hours before giving best to Clavet, the world No 34.

"It was a very tough match," Enqvist said. "The balls here are very different from those we used in Marseilles. I

couldn't feel them very well on my racket. I had my chances in the second set, but I'm tired mentally after winning the singles and doubles in Marseilles."

Encqvist, who played for Sweden against France in the Davis Cup final last December, looked like winning in straight sets until Clavet, playing only his second match of the year, forced the second set into a tie-break, which he won.

Encqvist broke Clavet's service to lead 2-1 in the third, but Clavet was in control after that, winning on his first match point.

In addition to Encqvist, the

tournament has also lost, through injury, Boris Becker and Goran Ivanisevic, the No 1 seed, neither of whom got on court. Also out are Michael Stich and Jim Courier. Engqvist's defeat left Marcelo Rios, of Chile, Felix Mantilla, of Spain, and Henman as the remaining seeds.

Rios, from Chile, trounced Adrian Panata, of Romania, 6-1, 6-4 in his first round match, showing no sign of the muscle strain that caused him to withdraw in the second set of the final in Marseille.

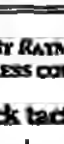
He was passed fit to play in Antwerp after treatment by a physiotherapist and produced

near flawless tennis in the first set of a match that featured some breathtaking rallies.

Rios fell 2-0 behind early in the second set, but quickly fought back to take the match in little more than an hour, the organisers no doubt highly relieved that their new top seed had passed his first test so convincingly.

The event, which offers a diamond-studded gold trophy to any player able to win it three times in five years, has been hit hard by illness and injury. Yevgeny Kafelnikov, of Russia, and Carlos Moya, of Spain, a finalist in the Australia Open, pulled out earlier this month.

Athletics: Romania's athletics federation said yesterday that it had banned Iulia Negura, the European cross country champion, for two years for failing a drugs test last November.



KEENE on CHESS

1

2

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Shock tactics

I have already commented in this column on the somewhat unorthodox approach to openings employed by many British grandmasters. Whereas the Russian school, exemplified primarily by Kasparov, relishes long theoretical variations, the standard British approach is to adopt unusual lines, with the objective of throwing the opponent off balance. The game today, a win by Michael Adams, the Great Britain No 2, against a member of the world elite, shows this strategy working to perfection.

White: Michael Adams
Black: Boris Gelfand
Linares, February 1997

Sicilian Defence

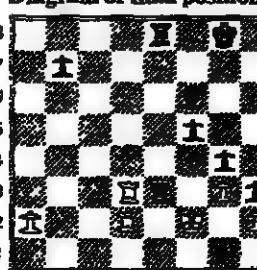
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|---------|------|
| 1 e4 | c5 |
| 2 Nf3 | d6 |
| 3 Bc4 | Nf6 |
| 4 Ng5 | Nd7 |
| 5 Bb3 | g6 |
| 6 c3 | Bg7 |
| 7 Nbd2 | O-O |
| 8 O-O | b6 |
| 9 Re1 | Ba8 |
| 10 Nh1 | Nee5 |
| 11 Bc2 | Nd5+ |
| 12 Bg5 | Nf6 |
| 13 Bb4 | h6 |
| 14 Qxh3 | Nee5 |
| 15 Qd1 | Nc6 |
| 16 Ne3 | Gf7 |
| 17 f4 | f5 |
| 18 g5 | g5 |
| 19 Qh5 | g5 |
| 20 g4 | h6? |
| 21 g5 | exf5 |
| 22 d4 | Nc4 |
| 23 d4 | Bc4 |
| 24 Qg6+ | Qg7 |
| 25 Qg7+ | Ke7 |
| 26 Re1 | Bc4 |
| 27 Bb7 | Pf6? |
| 28 Bc4 | h4 |
| 29 Bc6 | Bc2 |

| | |
|---------|---------------|
| 30 Nf5+ | Kg6 |
| 31 Ng3 | Bc4+ |
| 32 Ng2 | h5 |
| 33 Kf2 | h5 |
| 34 f5+ | Kf6 |
| 35 h4 | Rg6 |
| 36 Bf4 | Ra6 |
| 37 Ne4+ | Rc4 |
| 38 Kc4 | Rc4 |
| 39 Kf3 | Rc4 |
| 40 Rf1 | e2 |
| 41 f6! | Black resigns |

Correction

The diagram for the concluding position of the game yesterday between Shirov and Kasparov from Linares was printed incorrectly. Here is the correct final position.

Diagram of final position



a b c d e f g h

White resigned on account of 39. Ke2 f6c3; 40. Ke3 Bg5+; 41. Re3 Bxd2; 42. Kxd2 Bf4; 43. g4! g3; 44. h4g3 h2. This forced variation, which both sides clearly saw was inevitable, leads to Black promoting his h-pawn to a new queen.

Jersey Open

In the Deloitte and Touche Jersey Open, grandmaster Bogdan Lalic leads after three rounds with a 100 per cent score.

□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

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| Worcesters | 12 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 258 | 286 |
| Bath | 12 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 258 | 286 |
| Leicesters | 12 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 258 | 286 |
| Warwick | 11 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 322 | 294 |
| Gloucesters | 11 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 322 | 294 |
| Northampton | 13 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 288 | 288 |
| Gloucester | 12 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 315 | 294 |
| Somerset | 11 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 273 | 281 |
| Derby | 13 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 285 | 288 |
| Gloucester | 12 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 315 | 294 |
| Northampton | 13 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 288 | 288 |
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| Derby | 13 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 285 | 288 |
| Gloucester | 12 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 315 | 294 |
| Northampton | 13 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 288 | 288 |
| Derby | 13 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 285 | 288 |

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Vadla — Sale, Zagreb, 1977. White has broken through on the f-file and seems to have a strong position. However, his penetration to f7 has also left his pieces in a vulnerable situation. Can you see how Black exploited this?

Solution on page 46

2.00 (fm) 1. **HYSTERPUMA** (T G Midgland)
 2.00 (fm) 1. **HYSTERPUMA** (T G Midgland, 5-21
 1981) **AL** 1B, C, 22-23, 24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30-31, 32-33, 34-35, 36-37, 38-39, 40-41, 42-43, 44-45, 46-47, 48-49, 50-51, 52-53, 54-55, 56-57, 58-59, 60-61, 62-63, 64-65, 66-67, 68-69, 70-71, 72-73, 74-75, 76-77, 78-79, 80-81, 82-83, 84-85, 86-87, 88-89, 90-91, 92-93, 94-95, 96-97, 98-99, 100-101, 102-103, 104-105, 106-107, 108-109, 110-111, 112-113, 114-115, 116-117, 118-119, 120-121, 122-123, 124-125, 126-127, 128-129, 130-131, 132-133, 134-135, 136-137, 138-139, 140-141, 142-143, 144-145, 146-147, 148-149, 150-151, 152-153, 154-155, 156-157, 158-159, 160-161, 162-163, 164-165, 166-167, 168-169, 170-171, 172-173, 174-175, 176-177, 178-179, 180-181, 182-183, 184-185, 186-187, 188-189, 190-191, 192-193, 194-195, 196-197, 198-199, 200-201, 202-203, 204-205, 206-207, 208-209, 210-211, 212-213, 214-215, 216-217, 218-219, 220-221, 222-223, 224-225, 226-227, 228-229, 230-231, 232-233, 234-235, 236-237, 238-239, 240-241, 242-243, 244-245, 246-247, 248-249, 250-251, 252-253, 254-255, 256-257, 258-259, 260-261, 262-263, 264-265, 266-267, 268-269, 270-271, 272-273, 274-275, 276-277, 278-279, 280-281, 282-283, 284-285, 286-287, 288-289, 290-291, 292-293, 294-295, 296-297, 298-299, 300-301, 302-303, 304-305, 306-307, 308-309, 310-311, 312-313, 314-315, 316-317, 318-319, 320-321, 322-323, 324-325, 326-327, 328-329, 330-331, 332-333, 334-335, 336-337, 338-339, 340-341, 342-343, 344-345, 346-347, 348-349, 350-351, 352-353, 354-355, 356-357, 358-359, 360-361, 362-363, 364-365, 366-367, 368-369, 370-371, 372-373, 374-375, 376-377, 378-379, 380-381, 382-383, 384-385, 386-387, 388-389, 390-391, 392-393, 394-395, 396-397, 398-399, 400-401, 402-403, 404-405, 406-407, 408-409, 410-411, 412-413, 414-415, 416-417, 418-419, 420-421, 422-423, 424-425, 426-427, 428-429, 430-431, 432-433, 434-435, 436-437, 438-439, 440-441, 442-443, 444-445, 446-447, 448-449, 450-451, 452-453, 454-455, 456-457, 458-459, 460-461, 462-463, 464-465, 466-467, 468-469, 470-471, 472-473, 474-475, 476-477, 478-479, 480-481, 482-483, 484-485, 486-487, 488-489, 490-491, 492-493, 494-495, 496-497, 498-499, 500-501, 502-503, 504-505, 506-507, 508-509, 510-511, 512-513, 514-515, 516-517, 518-519, 520-521, 522-523, 524-525, 526-527, 528-529, 530-531, 532-533, 534-535, 536-537, 538-539, 540-541, 542-543, 544-545, 546-547, 548-549, 550-551, 552-553, 554-555, 556-557, 558-559, 560-561, 562-563, 564-565, 566-567, 568-569, 570-571, 572-573, 574-575, 576-577, 578-579, 580-581, 582-583, 584-585, 586-587, 588-589, 590-591, 592-593, 594-595, 596-597, 598-599, 600-601, 602-603, 604-605, 606-607, 608-609, 610-611, 612-613, 614-615, 616-617, 618-619, 620-621, 622-623, 624-625, 626-627, 628-629, 630-631, 632-633, 634-635, 636-637, 638-639, 640-641, 642-643, 644-645, 646-647, 648-649, 650-651, 652-653, 654-655, 656-657, 658-659, 660-661, 662-663, 664-665, 666-667, 668-669, 670-671, 672-673, 674-675, 676-677, 678-679, 680-681, 682-683, 684-685, 686-687, 688-689, 690-691, 692-693, 694-695, 696-697, 698-699, 700-701, 702-703, 704-705, 706-707, 708-709, 710-711, 712-713, 714-715, 716-717, 718-719, 720-721, 722-723, 724-725, 726-727, 728-729, 730-731, 732-733, 734-735, 736-737, 738-739, 740-741, 742-743, 744-745, 746-747, 748-749, 750-751, 752-753, 754-755, 756-757, 758-759, 760-761, 762-763, 764-765, 766-767, 768-769, 770-771, 772-773, 774-775, 776-777, 778-779, 780-781, 782-783, 784-785, 786-787, 788-789, 790-791, 792-793, 794-795, 796-797, 798-799, 800-801, 802-803, 804-805, 806-807, 808-809, 810-811, 812-813, 814-815, 816-817, 818-819, 820-821, 822-823, 824-825, 826-827, 828-829, 830-831, 832-833, 834-835, 836-837, 838-839, 840-841, 842-843, 844-845, 846-847, 848-849, 850-851, 852-853, 854-855, 856-857, 858-859, 860-861, 862-863, 864-865, 866-867, 868-869, 870-871, 872-873, 874-875, 876-877, 878-879, 880-881, 882-883, 884-885, 886-887, 888-889, 890-891, 892-893, 894-895, 896-897, 898-899, 900-901, 902-903, 904-905, 906-907, 908-909, 910-911, 912-913, 914-915, 916-917, 918-919, 920-921, 922-923, 924-925, 926-927, 928-

Jockey Clubs ests ground for cancer

Man giv

HUNTINGDON

INGFIELD PARK

CRICKET: LONG-AWAITED TEST SERIES VICTORY CANNOT MASK UNSAVOURY EPISODES DURING WINTER TOUR OF DISCONTENT

Aggressive style breaches acceptable boundaries

Towards the end of England's winter travels, here are a few thoughts prompted by reading the press, watching television and spending a lifetime on tour. For many weeks hardly a day went by without one being asked: "What on earth is the matter with English cricket?" More recently, things have looked up, albeit against one of our weaker cricketing brethren, and for that we may be truly grateful.

For too long the prevailing mood seemed to be one of disenchantment, which may have been to some extent the cause and to some extent the effect of events on the field. Going away on a long tour has always given rise to mixed feelings, but, when John Crawley's tour diary was published with a first entry that referred to his "real despair" at leaving his family and girlfriend for 14 weeks, it sent out an unfortunate message. In no time there were reports of a side at odds with its assignment and at loggerheads with

the press. Players in print and families on tour have long been bones of contention, going back all the way to 1873-74, when the newlywed "W.G." used his first visit to Australia as a honeymoon.

In Australia, in 1920-21, the presence of the wife and mother of Johnny Douglas, the MCC captain, caused as much disaffection as the fact that Rockley Wilson, a member of the team, was writing for the *Daily Express*. Again, in Australia, in 1946-47, objection was taken to Brian Sellers, an England selector, filing disparaging reports to the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. This time, apart from the Crawley diary, there have been the captain's commentaries and the coach's contentions, both, naturally enough, putting the case for the defence.

One of the problems of such columns is that they preempt the deliberation of future selection committees. If captain and coach convince themselves that they have the

right players around them, and repeatedly say so (although they may well be wrong), selection autonomy is surely undermined. As for players being pleased enough to write for the press but not to share a Christmas drink with them, as happened in Zimbabwe, that, of course, is futile.

It may be another world from the one in which there used to be a football match on Christmas morning—the players against the writers on some Australian beach—referred by the score-cum-baggage-master-cum-majordomo, the inimitable George Duckworth, and followed by refreshments and good fellowship. The press are more swiftness now and more hurtful in their criticisms; so much so that I am amazed sometimes that the players are as tolerant as they are. To withdraw into some sort of laager, though, never does any good. There have been times this winter

when David Lloyd, the England coach, has seemed to be at the end of his tether, driven almost to distraction by circumstance and passion; and that, too, cannot be for the best. Commitment and competitiveness were always obligatory; today they are all-consuming and I believe that there is an unhealthy side to that. What is intrinsic to the culture of Australia and South Africa, by way of hype and manifest aggression, is foreign to many Englishmen.

Coming from a more temperate climate, England's cricketers have always lived and had their being in their own more temperate way. Subjected to the rigours of the present regime, with its emphasis on intensity and shadow boxing in the dressing-room and the most exhaustive training schedule out of it, it is perfectly possible that many of our finest players (Hutton or Compton or Coad, for example, or Alec Bedser, for that matter)

would not have developed as effectively and as naturally. It could certainly be said to have cost us a good number of runs from Gower.

When, on this tour, England have bowled quite astonishingly badly at the start of a match, which has not been an uncommon occurrence, might it not have been because they were too driven, too fast and too wrought up? Obsession can be not so much a spur as a hindrance; it has to be entertained with suspicion and watched with care.

In Australia, not many years ago, the Young England side found the opposition's sledging so remorseless that they decided there was nothing for it but to retaliate in kind. Their efforts were so embarrassingly awful, though, that they soon went back to concentrating on their cricket. The best, or worst, they could think up was something on the lines of "What cricket ship did this one's ancestors come out on, then?"

Yet, listening to the present Eng-

land side in the field in New Zealand, as is possible on television through the stump microphone, has been like being at Smithfield Market. Commentators refer to ill-felling as though it were nothing unusual; catches are claimed that may not be catches; and the exorbitance of the appealing by the England team has reached hysterical proportions.

It is splendid that England have won a couple of Test matches. They were not that far from winning all of the five they have played this winter. They have an enormously resolute captain, whose batting in the last Test match at Christchurch was positively heroic, and a team spirit that should help to close the gap between themselves and Australia when they meet this summer; but do we really want, or need, to play our cricket quite so slavishly, quite so intemperately? It is a question that has to be addressed, because very soon the young will be doing it too.

Appeals have become hysterical

land, whose batting in the last Test match at Christchurch was positively heroic, and a team spirit that should help to close the gap between themselves and Australia when they meet this summer; but do we really want, or need, to play our cricket quite so slavishly, quite so intemperately? It is a question that has to be addressed, because very soon the young will be doing it too.

'Obsession can be a hindrance'

Evening Post. This time, apart from the Crawley diary, there have been the captain's commentaries and the coach's contentions, both, naturally enough, putting the case for the defence.

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Chance for England to regain lost expertise

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT IN CHRISTCHURCH

NEW ZEALAND is full of people who apparently believe that the important cricket of the winter is only just beginning. England's players rightly beg to differ, but they must not deceive themselves that their emphatic success in the Test series renders the rest of the itinerary irrelevant.

The final fortnight of this tour constitutes the kind of obstacle course that habitually brings England down. There are five one-day internationals, the first of them a floodlit fixture at Lancaster Park today, and, if recent form is an accurate guide, England will be hard put to win any of them.

It is unarguably true that England could now finish a distant second in these internationals without the roof falling in to threaten leadership and personnel, as most certainly it would have done if the Test series had ended differently. Captain and coach are safe for another summer and so, hopefully, are the majority of the players who won the last two Tests, for at last there was an impression of a unit worthy of trust and perseverance.

The team, however, will have been told that a "demob happy" mentality is unacceptable just yet. They must convince themselves that one-day cricket, like it or not, can no longer be dismissed as an insignificant postscript to an international tour and that the benefits of a winning habit can be usefully extended to this form of the game.

When England last strung together two Test wins, on the corresponding tour of New Zealand five years ago, they went on to play their most compelling one-day cricket for years in the World Cup in

Australasia. They reached the final, looking the most impressive team, and, but for a degree of fatigue during the closing fortnight, they would surely have won it.

There is no World Cup now to act as an energiser, just a hotch-potch of commercially orientated fixtures occupying a fortnight in which the players' thoughts will understandably be drifting to the homes left last November. It is at times like this that the reserve tank of pride and professionalism is required.

By way of a spur, it is worth repeating the gruesome statistics of England's overseas one-day internationals over the past two winters. Of 14 games against Test nations, they have won one and lost 13. This is a staggering level of incompetence.

While supporters back home raged and despaired, especially over a final fixture against Zimbabwe in which England were an unmitigated rabble, the players were neither oblivious nor unmoved.

"We were dreadful in those games," Nasser Hussain, the vice-captain, said, "and it is important we put that right. We have got to stop playing one-day cricket as if we were still in England. A different game has evolved overseas now, and it means you cannot just keep wickets in hand and hope to score at six runs an over in the closing stages. You have to be more positive throughout."

Part of the problem is that England are not ideally equipped. "We brought a



Atherton caught fishing: not a slack dismissal but the captain's way of relaxing after his two outstanding innings in the final Test

needs improvement. We were pretty poor in Zimbabwe."

Atherton intends to go in first, rather than batting at No 3 or No 5, as he did on the first leg of the tour, and his job will be to anchor the innings while the stroke-makers inject the tempo necessary to ensure that England achieve something more imposing than 179, their best effort of three in Zimbabwe.

New Zealand have a resourceful one-day side, including some big hitters and miserly bowlers such as Gavin Larsen and Dipak Patel. On home territory, they are likely to win more than they lose, but England must strive to emerge with dignity.

One certainty is that the games will lack nothing in atmosphere. All 25,000 tickets

for today were sold out a week ago and capacity crowds are also confidently predicted elsewhere.

There is a culture for one-day cricket here, a lust for the frivolity of it all, that sometimes spills over into the more serious arena—such as when the computerised scoreboard at the Christchurch Test spent as much time acclaiming the "Barry Army" and showing images of dancing girls as it did displaying the score.

If the one-day series goes their way, the New Zealand public will happily accept that they have won the games that matter. England, of course, could console themselves that they know otherwise—but it would make a refreshing change if they did not have to try.

| TEST SERIES AVERAGES | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|----|-------|-----|--------|-------------|------|------|----------------|---|----|
| England | | | | | | New Zealand | | | | | |
| Batting | M | MO | Runs | HS | Avg | 100 | 50 | Cts | Batting | M | MO |
| M.A. Atherton | 3 | 4 | 325 | 118 | 108.33 | 1 | 2 | 1 | D.L. Vettori | 4 | 4 |
| A.J. Stewart | 3 | 4 | 257 | 113 | 64.25 | 1 | 1 | 1 | S.P. Fleming | 4 | 4 |
| G.P. Thorpe | 3 | 4 | 217 | 61 | 54.25 | 0 | 1 | 1 | N.J. Adair | 4 | 4 |
| G.G. Cook | 3 | 4 | 121 | 50 | 30.25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | H.J. Hadfield | 4 | 4 |
| P.C.R. Tufnell | 3 | 4 | 36 | 18 | 9.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | B.A. Pocock | 4 | 4 |
| N. Crouse | 3 | 4 | 111 | 55 | 27.75 | 0 | 1 | 1 | J.A. Douglas | 4 | 4 |
| N. Hussain | 3 | 4 | 112 | 54 | 28.00 | 0 | 1 | 1 | A.C. Parore | 4 | 4 |
| A.D. Murray | 3 | 4 | 21 | 21 | 5.25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | L.K. Compton | 4 | 4 |
| R.D. Giff | 3 | 4 | 31 | 31 | 7.75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | D.N. Patel | 4 | 4 |
| N.V. Knight | 3 | 4 | 55 | 29 | 13.75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | H.T. Dyer | 4 | 4 |
| A.R. Caddick | 3 | 4 | 30 | 23 | 7.50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | G.J. Allen | 4 | 4 |
| D. Gough | 3 | 4 | 20 | 18 | 5.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | J.T.C. Vaughan | 4 | 4 |
| C. White | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | D.K. Morrison | 4 | 4 |
| Bowling | | | | | | Bowling | | | | | |
| M.A. Atherton | 3 | 4 | 30.1 | 27 | 162 | 19 | 15.0 | 4.95 | D.L. Vettori | 4 | 4 |
| A.J. Stewart | 3 | 4 | 27.3 | 21 | 251 | 19 | 15.0 | 4.95 | N.J. Adair | 4 | 4 |
| G.P. Thorpe | 3 | 4 | 57.5 | 25 | 174 | 8 | 27.5 | 4.45 | D.W. Pridmore | 4 | 4 |
| G.G. Cook | 3 | 4 | 55.2 | 102 | 3 | 34.0 | 2.47 | 0.00 | H.J. Hadfield | 4 | 4 |
| P.C.R. Tufnell | 3 | 4 | 132.4 | 262 | 7 | 34.7 | 1.93 | 0.00 | D.N. Patel | 4 | 4 |
| N. Crouse | 3 | 4 | 26.5 | 77 | 2 | 38.0 | 2.51 | 0.00 | J.T.C. Vaughan | 4 | 4 |
| A.D. Murray | 3 | 4 | 26.5 | 77 | 2 | 38.0 | 2.51 | 0.00 | C.L. Davis | 4 | 4 |
| R.D. Giff | 3 | 4 | 26.5 | 77 | 2 | 38.0 | 2.51 | 0.00 | H.T. Dyer | 4 | 4 |
| N.V. Knight | 3 | 4 | 26.5 | 77 | 2 | 38.0 | 2.51 | 0.00 | G.J. Allen | 4 | 4 |
| A.R. Caddick | 3 | 4 | 26.5 | 77 | 2 | 38.0 | 2.51 | 0.00 | D.K. Morrison | 4 | 4 |
| D. Gough | 3 | 4 | 26.5 | 77 | 2 | 38.0 | 2.51 | 0.00 | | | |
| C. White | 3 | 4 | 26.5 | 77 | 2 | 38.0 | 2.51 | 0.00 | | | |

ALSO BOWLED: G.P. Thorpe 1-0-0

ALSO BOWLED: S.A. Parnell 2-0-10-0

SNOOKER

Ebdon goes on the offensive

By PHIL YATES

PETER EBDON, who defeated Mark Williams 5-4 to reach the quarter-finals of the International Open in Aberdeen yesterday, has decided to adopt a more aggressive style after slipping into an overly defensive approach.

Ebdon, from London, captured the Regal Scottish Masters title last September, but his results in tournaments carrying ranking points have been extremely disappointing since then and he has fallen from third to ninth on the provisional world list. "It wasn't deliberate, but I did become bogged down," Ebdon said. "I was just weighing everything up for too long and generally trying too hard. It led to a lot of my flair and confidence falling by the wayside."

Ebdon rudely left the arena with Williams still to pot an academic black at the end of a fourth frame that he had already won to move 3-1 ahead. This uncharacteristic display of bad manners was undoubtedly a by-product of a growing frustration, but, after the interval, he reeled off three



Ebdon: trying too hard

straight frames to lead 4-3. A brown-to-black clearance in the eighth frame, which included an exceptional blind pot on the blue to a middle pocket, helped Williams to level at 4-4, but Ebdon took the deciding frame on the brown after benefiting from a questionable "miss" decision by Jan Verhaas, the referee, with one red remaining on the table.

"This season has been a case of 'Will the real Peter Ebdon step forward,'" Ebdon, the runner-up in the world

championship last year, said. "I was just delighted to get the bit between my teeth because my success has always been built on burning desire and adrenalin."

Ebdon goes forward to meet Ronnie O'Sullivan, who stylishly completed his 5-2 win over Dene O'Kane, of New Zealand, with a 142 total clearance. It was the highest break of the event so far and puts him in line to collect a £5,000 bonus.

"Now I've got Psycho," O'Sullivan said, in obvious reference to Ebdon's renowned intensity at the table. "I love Peter to bits because he's totally nuts. He always gets really involved in the game."

Tony Drago, who has never appeared in the semi-finals of a world ranking event, reached the last eight by recovering from a 3-2 deficit to defeat Joe Swail, of Belfast, 5-3. He will now play either John Parrott or Dave Harold. Alan McManus, the No 6 seed, enjoyed a comfortable 5-1 victory over Stuart Parnell, the world No 147.

GOLF

Purple patch shortens the odds on Price

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

NICK PRICE, a winner and a runner-up in his past two events, is the favourite to win the Alfred Dunhill PGA tournament at the Houghton Golf Club, Johannesburg, starting today.

Price, from Zimbabwe, finished second in the South African Open and was then a runaway winner in the Sun City last weekend. "I really feel that I'm getting my putting touch back," Price, the former world No 1, said. He completed 72 holes on tricky, spiked up greens at Sun City without three-putting and finished 20 under par, giving him an eight-shot advantage over David Frost, of South Africa, in second place.

The Dunhill is the third of the three back-to-back PGA European Tour events on the South African circuit; the winner, in addition to claiming a £300,000 cheque, will qualify for the World Series of Golf and that tournament, in Alorin, Ohio, carries a ten-year exemption to the US

PGA Tour. The springboard that Price used to catapult himself on to the United States circuit 15 years ago. Before his victory at Sun City, Price had not won a tournament since the Zimbabwe Open, in December 1995, and he is eager to launch his next assault on the US Tour with another victory under his belt.

The Dunhill was dogged by bad weather last year and Sven Straver, from Germany, the eventual winner, had to come back on the Monday morning to edge out Ernie Els, of South Africa, in a rain-shortened tournament. Straver is back among a strong European contingent.

Els is not concentrating instead on tournaments in the United States leading up to the Masters. Price's strongest challenge, therefore, should again come from Frost, who is rapidly running into form, although Gordon Sherry, from Scotland, signalled his intent in the pro-am yesterday with a hole-in-one at the 145-yard 17th.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Branson rides with Broncos

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

RICHARD BRANSON bought a stake in the London Broncos yesterday and heard Barry Maranta, the club chairman, predict: "We will soon be the force in world rugby league."

Branson declined to disclose the amount of money that he was investing, but admitted that he had taken a 15 per cent stake in the club.

Maranta said: "In three or four years the team will be the force in world rugby league. There will be no team in the world that can hold a candle to us. We've got a good strong team and we will be a match for any team on both sides of the equator."

"We are a one-day team, which is what the concept of world Super League is about. The challenge to us is how we can tap the massive human resources available to us. The enormous talent that exists in the south is where the future of London rugby lies and the untapped talent in London is really the exciting thing."

"Our under-16 team, which 12 months ago had never played rugby league, is now unbeaten in the winter compe-

tion, beating teams in the North whose lads have been playing rugby league for eight or nine years; and our seconds are beating historic teams by 30 or 40 points."

"So, although we will have one or two high-profile players, such as Martin Offiah, I can't wait for the day when the 19, 20 and 21-year-olds start coming through, because we've put a lot of effort, energy and expertise into developing our youngsters."

Branson explained his eagerness to link up with the



Branson: buys stake

Sidhu earns recall for India's tour of Caribbean

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

NAVJOT SIDHU, whose international cricket career was thought to have ended when he walked out of the tour of England last summer, has been recalled by India for the tour of the West Indies that starts later this month.

Sidhu, the opening batsman, 34, was involved in a number of disputes with Mohammad Asharuddin, then the captain, but he has won back his place after India's defeats in the recent Test and limited-overs series in South Africa.

Ajay Kurnulla, 28, the Bombay fast bowler, is the only newcomer in the 16-strong party. The selectors rejected an appeal from Sachin Tendulkar, Asharuddin's successor, for an extra player for the ten-week tour, which begins on February 28 with a four-day match against Jamaica.

Madan Lal, the India coach, also failed to persuade the selectors to name five specialist new-ball bowlers. The party includes four seam bowlers and two spinners. There was again no place for Sanjay Manjrekar and Vinod Kambli, the middle-order batsmen.

The first Test starts at Sabina Park, Jamaica, on March 6. The tour will feature five Test matches and four one-day internationals.

The West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) is to meet in Antigua on Saturday to finalise its bid to stage the World Cup in 2003. Officials are also hoping to persuade the International Cricket Council (ICC) to hold the tournament every two years.

The 2003 event has already been awarded to South Africa—England are hosts in 1999—but the WICB is planning what Andrew Sealy, its secretary, described as a "two-fold attack" before the ICC meets in Malaysia next month.

"We feel that we are entitled to the World Cup in 2003... but, outside of that fact, we are also keen to have the World Cup changed from every four years to every two years, and we are suggesting that 2001 is when the next World Cup could be held after 1999," Sealy said. The WICB was "cautiously optimistic" that the final decision over the 2003 venue, which is not expected until the full ICC meeting at Lord's in July, will be in its favour.

A superb innings of 67 by Asif Mujtaba, the captain, helped Pakistan A to beat Bangladesh by six wickets in the opening match of a four-team tournament in Dhaka yesterday. Needing 183 to win, Pakistan A won with 11 overs to spare. India A meet Sri Lanka A today.

Brian McMillan, the South Africa all-rounder, is doubtful for the first Test against Australia in Johannesburg next week because of damaged ankle ligaments. McMillan, 33, was flown to Pretoria for a check-up yesterday, and has been advised to rest until Monday.

Sussex have announced pre-tax profits of £2,286 for the year ended October 31. It is the ninth successive year that the county has reported a surplus.

INDIA SQUAD: S. Tendulkar (captain), A. Kumble, N. Seervi, A. Jadhav, V. Laxman, S. Ganguly, R. Dravid, M. Asharuddin, N. Mongia, S. Karim, J. Singh, V. Prasad, D. Gansani, A. Kurnulla, R. Singh, S. Joshi.

هكذا من الاميل

Wolde in poor health after waiting four years in jail without charge

Running out of time at end of world



There are ordeals in life that make marathons — even Olympic marathons — seem like an afternoon stroll.

Mamo Wolde, who clambered onto the winner's rostrum after the Olympic marathon in Mexico City in 1968, is about to set out on the last, and toughest, lap of the worst ordeal of his life.

Wolde has been held in an Ethiopian jail without charge, without trial, and without the benefit of legal advice, for the past 4½ years. The International Olympic Committee and the International Amateur Athletic Federation have continually lobbied to have him released. Amnesty International has vigorously campaigned against holding Wolde and others like him without charges and trial.

Now, at last, there is news of action of a sort. Wolde, who has always maintained his innocence, is to be charged. He still does not know what the specific charges are to be: he still has not been told what it is he is supposed to have done, but he knows that the ordeal is far from over. It was announced last week that Wolde is one of 5,198 Ethiopians to be charged with genocide, war crimes and murder.

Yet there was a time when Wolde was hailed as one of his land's finest heroes. He and Abebe Bikila, his countryman, were the great African double act of Olympic marathon history. Bikila won the event barefoot in Rome in 1960, and again four years later in Tokyo, just six weeks after an appendix operation and this time wearing shoes.

In Mexico City, in 1968, a leg injury forced Bikila to pull out after ten miles, but Wolde went on to win, making it three in a row for Ethiopia. His career spanned four Olympic games. In 1956, in Melbourne, Ethiopia competed for the first time, and Wolde, young and raw, finished last and almost unnoticed in the heats of the 800 and 1,500 metres. He was also in the 4 x 400 metres relay team —



Wolde, left, on a training run with Bikila, his fellow Ethiopian Olympic marathon champion

who also finished last in their heat.

Yet, in the high altitude of Mexico City, Wolde came back to win gold by three minutes in the marathon and silver in the 10,000 metres. His athletic ability had won him, too, a career in the army. He went home a hero to Addis Ababa, where he was promoted to captain in the Imperial guard of the aging Emperor Haile Selassie, and he was promised a fine new home — but he never got it.

In 1974 Haile Selassie was over-

thrown by a military coup. The army leaders, under Mengistu, established a ruthless communist regime. A reign of terror followed for 17 years, with regulations outlawing private land ownership and assembly ruthlessly enforced by revolutionary guards. According to Amnesty International, when the Government was overthrown in 1974, Wolde was thrown out of the army and went on to work as an athletic coach up to the time of his arrest in 1992.

In late 1991 the new Ethiopian

Government rounded up more than 2,000 alleged officials and collaborators with the Mengistu regime, and Wolde was caught up in this sweep and arrested. Except for two short periods of temporary release, he has been detained without trial ever since.

It is difficult, even for visitors to his jail, to work out exactly what it is alleged he has done. Kenny Moore, the American athlete and sportswriter, who ran with him in Mexico and who finished a place behind him in

the Olympic marathon in Munich in 1972, was allowed to visit Wolde two years ago.

At the prison, known as 'The End of the World', Moore established that the original allegation was that Wolde had got involved in a summary execution in 1978, but that there were many witnesses who said that Wolde had shot nobody. There was only one person levelling the accusation against Wolde, and the other witnesses believed that there was an attempt to pin the blame on Wolde to save the skin of a corrupt official.

Moore found Wolde in poor physical and mental health, suffering from liver trouble, bronchitis and hearing loss — but still adamant that he was completely innocent. Other visitors, including Amnesty International, have confirmed that Wolde is a sick man, with his eyesight also now failing, and none of them has been able to establish any substance in the allegations against him.

The news last week that there may at last be specific charges and trials of such prisoners has been welcomed by

'Originally he was alleged to have been involved in an execution'

Amnesty, but even so they are concerned that those charged in Addis Ababa could receive death sentences. If found guilty — the fate that could await 46 defendants already on trial there, Amnesty opposes the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate, cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

There has been enough killing in Ethiopia, the organisation said, and further executions will not right the wrongs or contribute towards better respect for human rights in the country now and in the future.

At least, with the promise of a trial, Wolde, now 65, will not stay in 'The End of the World' without even a charge being brought against him. In Mexico City, when Wolde brought gold and glory to Ethiopia with the race of his life, the world watched with admiration. If, at last, he is put on trial, perhaps this time for his life, Ethiopia should know that, once again, the eyes of the world will be on them and the fate of Mamo Wolde.

JOHN BRYANT

SQUASH: CHANGED SCORING SYSTEM LEADS TO SURPRISING RESULTS AMONG SUPER LEAGUE PROFESSIONALS

Players finding pitfalls in spectator-friendly format

By COLIN MCQUILLAN

WITH Mark Cairns, the British champion, losing to Derek Ryan, of Ireland, and Simon Parke, the England No 1, going down to Del Harris, of Colchester, in the Super Squash League (SSL) this week, some players are suggesting that the new, nine-point, American scoring system, brought in this season, is the reason for such surprise results.

"It certainly changes things," An-

drew Shelley, the SSL director, said. "We moved from 15-point games to consolidate the evenings from an entertainment point of view and it has been an unqualified success. Not a single tie has finished 3-0 so far this season and few matches last beyond 55 minutes. With a single show court, this is a perfect format for club audiences."

The defeat of Cairns, by 9-6, 9-0, 5-9, 2-9, 9-3, as Ryan led Rowlands

Manchester to a 2-1 home win over Dunraven Maesteg, and that of Parke, by 9-7, 2-9, 7-9, 8-10, when he dropped a vital home point to Harris in Surliton's 2-1 win over ICL Lionhearts, the defending SSL champions, illustrates the downside of a scoring system adopted purely for presentation reasons.

Cairns and Parke developed through the national squad system set up by Jonah Barrington and the late Edward Poore. They are classic English players, long on patient

rallying rather than the inventive aggression coming out of Australia, Europe and North America. Point-per-rally scoring over the short nine-point course tends to rattle them.

Nothing illustrates the changed situation more than the complete failure of Mark Chaloner, the discovery of last season, to win a single match for ICL Lionhearts so far this season. Yet Chaloner is one of the strongest advocates of the SSL panel of the new scoring, Shelley insists.

"With professional league play, we are providing entertainment as much as competition," he said. "It is not like bidding for the game's great historic titles or even like club play with no time confinements."

"Mark is a slow starter, who knows he has to find a way to win within the changing demands of the league's presentation devices. Just another professional skill, really."

Results, page 42

SNOW REPORTS

| | Depth (cm) | Conditions | Runs to rest | Weather (°F/°C) | Last snow |
|-------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| AUSTRIA | | | | | |
| Schladming | 30 | 50 good powder | good | snow | 1 19/2 |
| St Anton | 80 | 270 powder | good | fine | -3 19/2 |
| FRANCE | | | | | |
| Paine | 100 | 250 good powder | good | sun | -14 18/2 |
| La Plagne | 150 | 210 good powder | good | sun | -2 18/2 |
| ITALY | | | | | |
| Cervinia | 80 | 350 good | crust | good | fair 2 18/2 |
| SWITZERLAND | | | | | |
| S. Moritz | 55 | 300 good powder | good | fine | 0 18/2 |
| St. Moritz | 70 | 180 good powder | good | sun | 0 18/2 |

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L = lower slopes; U = upper

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 42

HAPTOTROPISM

(c) The phenomenon whereby plant organs, as the tendrils of climbing plants, exhibit tropic movements in response to the stimulus of touch.

LYCID

(c) Of or pertaining to a beetle of the family Lycidae. From the Greek proper name *Lycus*. The generic name is *Lycus*, introduced by J. C. Fabricius in *Manus Insectorum*, 1787. The cerambycid beetle *Elytrophus ignitus* is a mimic of the lycid beetle *Lycus loricatus* and *Lycus simulans*. They are typical cases of Batesian mimicry, the cerambycids being palatable to predators but gaining protection by looking like the distasteful lycids.

MOULI

(c) A kitchen electric mixer. An affectionate shortened form of the French proprietary brand name *Moulinette*.

HOPO

(c) A trap for game consisting of two converging hedges in the form of the letter V, with a pit at the angle, into which the game is driven. From an African language.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1... Rxd3; 2. cxd3 (2. Qxd3 Kxf7 wins a piece); 2... Qx2; 3. Kd1; 4. Rxf2. Checkmate.

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RACING 43

McCoy back to winning ways at Folkestone

SPORT

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20 1997

CRICKET 44

England looking to strike hard in grand finale

World record fee secures move

Newcastle have to dig deep for Tuigamala

By MARK SOUSTER

VAAIGA TUIGAMALA yesterday signed a five-year contract to play rugby union for Newcastle and, in so doing, helped the sporting club on Tyneside that is bankrolled by Sir John Hall to break a world transfer fee record for the second time in seven months.

Last July, Newcastle United Football Club paid £15 million to secure the services of Alan Shearer. Yesterday, the Courage Clubs Championship second division rugby union club, the fledgling arm of Sir John's empire, showed that it, too, means business with a deal that comfortably exceeds £1 million.

By turning his back on rugby league, Tuigamala, the former All Black, becomes the most expensive player in union history as part of a package which dwarfs the fees paid by Swansea and Richmond for Scott Gibbs and Scott Quinnell respectively.

Tuigamala, 28, has ended a three-year association with Wigan, for whom he played 99 times and scored 60 tries. His winter sojourn at Wasps whetted his appetite for the union game and that, combined with Wigan's financial situation and Newcastle's muscle, meant that a move was inevitable. Wigan will receive an estimated £500,000 while Tuigamala will earn at least £150,000 a year. Newcastle

will repay a £180,000 loyalty bonus to the Super League on his behalf.

The mood at Newcastle was upbeat as Tuigamala completed his move, the glint in Sir John's eye unmistakable. Having been delayed at a Bank of England board meeting earlier in the day, he was soon into his stride, first enthusing about his plans to make Newcastle the dominant

FACTFILE

1988: Born, Faleasiu, Western Samoa, September 4.
1992: Moved to New Zealand.
1993: Played for New Zealand Colts.
1994: Played for New Zealand against British Columbia in Vancouver.
1995: International debut against United States during World Cup.
1996: Collected the last of his 10 caps against England at Twickenham.
1994: Joined Wigan on January 8.
1995: Played in both Western Samoa matches in the rugby league World Cup.
1996: Signed four-month contract with Wasps and plays rugby union for Western Samoa against Ireland.
1997: Returns to Wigan then signs for Newcastle for £500,000.

club force in Europe and then taking a swipe at the Rugby Football Union for questioning his resolve, commitment and motives.

Beside him, Tuigamala, a Western Samoan noted for his Christian beliefs, sat beaming. He was more circumspect, speaking only of his delight at signing and his intention to help to spread the "gospel of

rugby" to the North East. "The whole package is attractive, not just for me but also my family," Tuigamala said. He becomes the fifteenth international recruited by Rob Andrew, the Newcastle director of rugby, whose revolution has so far cost more than £3 million.

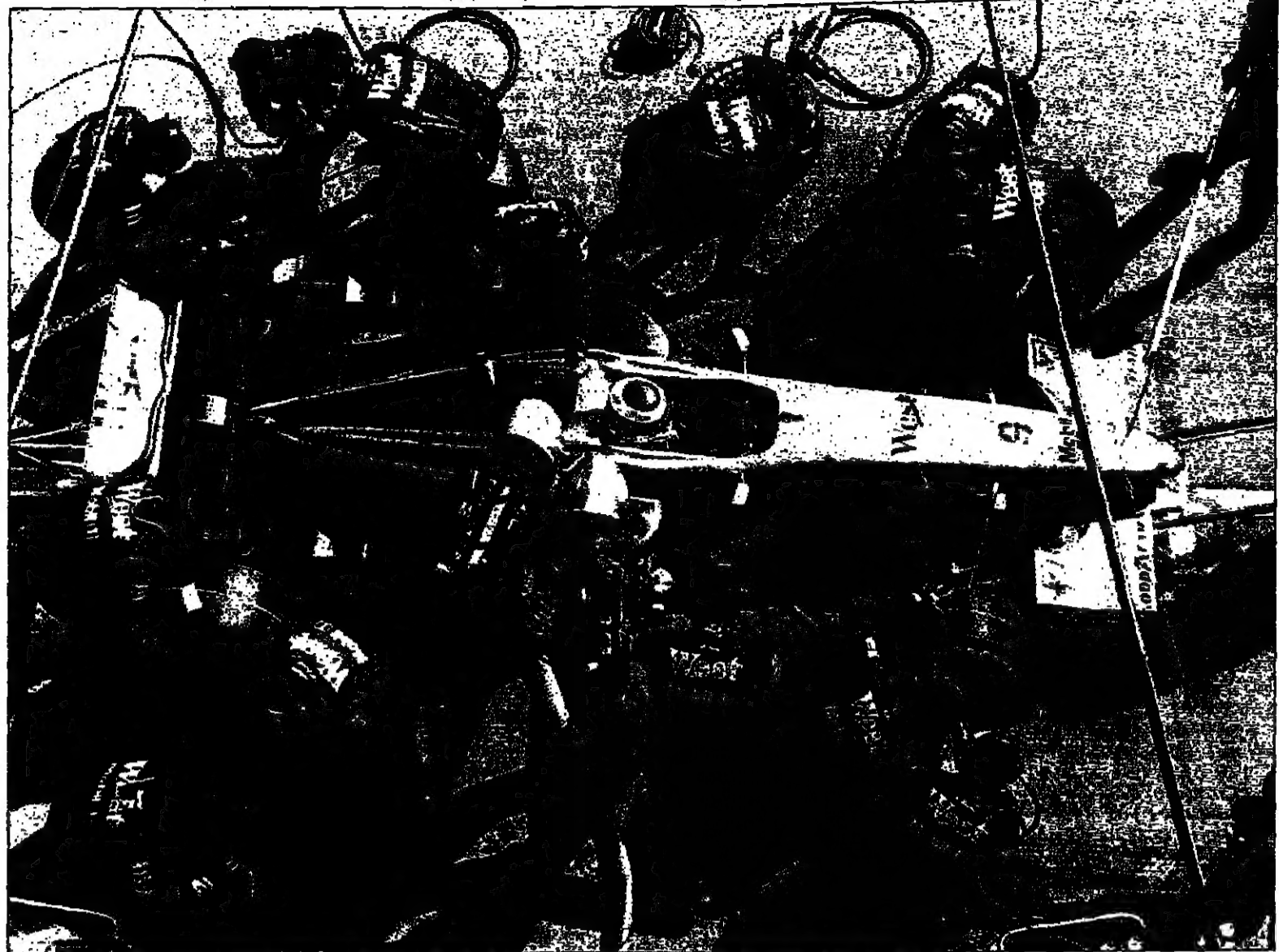
"As a Christian there is a real fellowship here and I thank God for guiding me," Tuigamala said. "I've always been an ambitious person and set my own goals and standards. Newcastle are going places and that is something I have always thrived on."

Asked if he agreed with the suggestion that his best years were behind him, Tuigamala said: "I'm not at my prime - I think I'm just starting to crawl. I feel I have a lot to offer on and off the field. I have always been fortunate that I have had a talent which I am very proud of and a reputation that I have got to uphold. Wigan enhanced that, but Newcastle will allow me the chance to express myself."

Andrew denied that he had taken a gamble and hinted that more signings were likely. "We have signed one of the world's rugby stars both on and off the field," he said. "His personality will help to promote the game in the North East. We are determined to build a strong squad which can compete."

Sir John believes that the creation of a transfer market will benefit rugby union as a whole, not just Newcastle. "We are all in competition," he said. "Each club, each investor, will decide what he can afford. That's the marketplace. Rugby union has a tremendous future, that is why we are in it. By developing clubs we are helping to develop the English team."

Tuigamala, who joins Par Lam, his compatriot and international captain, at Kingston Park, is not eligible for Newcastle's Pilkington Cup debut against Leicester on Saturday. He is expected to make his debut against Wakefield on March 8.



David Coulthard waits as the McLaren-Mercedes mechanics practise their pit-stop routine at the Montmelo circuit, Spain, yesterday

Williams case casts pall over Formula One testing

By OLIVER HOULT

DAMON HILL, the Formula One world champion, was testing his new Arrows-Yamaha at Silverstone yesterday, but, like the rest of the sport, his mind was far away at another circuit. The trial of members of the Williams team that Hill used to drive for, for the manslaughter of Ayrton Senna, begins in Imola today and Hill was preoccupied with its ramifications.

Because of a quirk of Italian law, Hill will appear as a witness for the prosecution, even though he was a teammate of Senna, the Brazilian three-times world champion, when he was killed in a crash at the Tamburello corner during the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix. Hill was originally called to appear at the trial today, but has now been told that it will be in the spring.

"It is a very unpleasant sort

of thing to have to go through," Hill said. "It was traumatic enough going through it the first time, when Ayrton died, and to have to experience it all again is not really what you need."

"It is not something you want to dwell on too much, but lessons have to be learnt and, since Ayrton's death, a lot of things have changed in Formula One and it is a lot safer. His crash highlighted the fact that we have got a responsibility to provide entertainment to the public and not just a macabre spectacle."

The opening of the trial today is likely to be dominated by procedural detail with none of the protagonists present. Frank Williams, the Williams team owner, Patrick Head, the technical director, and Adrian Newey, the chief designer, the three accused from the Wil-

iams team, were also initially scheduled to appear today, but the Italian courts decided that it was in everybody's interest to avoid a media mêlée and they, along with three race officials who are facing the same charge, will all appear within the next three months.

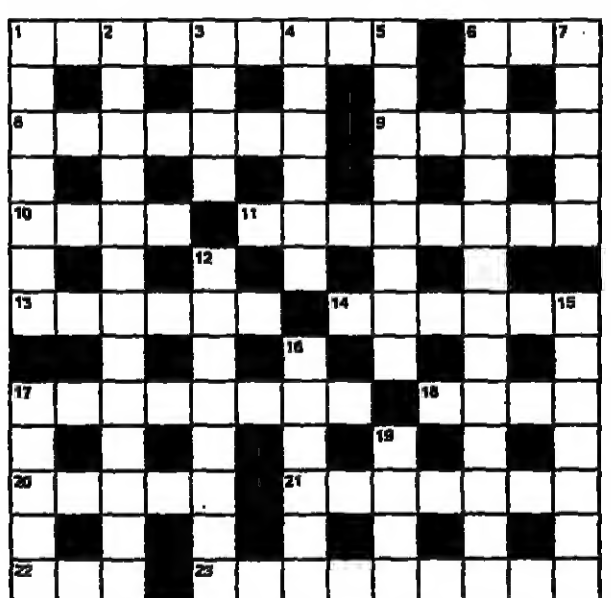
Prosecutors at the trial will argue that the steering column on Senna's car snapped as a result of a poor weld as he turned into the Tamburello curve at Imola. Williams believes that the break was caused by the impact of the crash.

Manslaughter carries a maximum prison sentence of five years in Italy, although legal sources there expect that, in the event of a conviction, a suspended sentence is most likely to be imposed.

Senna trial, page 14

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

- 1 Let off (gun, prisoner) (9)
- 6 Crazy (3)
- 8 Bracing-point of lever (7)
- 9 Having come up (5)
- 10 Back (of neck) (4)
- 11 Dilemma (8)
- 13,14 Speck in Pacific, giant carvings (6,6)
- 17 Scot. Sabbatharians (informal) (3,5)
- 18 Light-focusing device (4)
- 20 Suspicious (5)
- 21 Henry —, Eng. composer d. 1695 (7)
- 22 Sick: staff of office (3)
- 23 In over-tolerant fashion (9)

DOWN

- 1 Self-protection (7)
- 2 Composed, cool-headed (4-)
- 3 Fling (4)
- 4 Upstart (6)
- 5 Uncanny state (8)
- 6 Bad handling (13)
- 7 Shabby and dirty (5)
- 12 Treachery (8)
- 15 To show (7)
- 16 Make more intense (6)
- 17 Biscuit with egg ice-cream (5)
- 19 Strongly recommend (4)

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All flights are subject to availability.

Post your entry to Times Two Crossword, PO Box 6886, London E2 8SP to arrive by next Monday. The winners' names and solution will appear on Wednesday.

Name/Address

SOLUTION TO NO 1021
ACROSS: 1 Basis 7 Whoopee 8 Presley 9 Library
11 Devoid 13 Arboretum 15 Up the wall 19 Yorker
21 Brewster 23 Islandic 24 Wizenard 25 Dry up
DOWN: 1 Biped 2 Swerve 3 Sylvia 4 Hwy 5 Source
6 Bear hug 10 If only 12 Drawer 14 Upstairs 16 Howler
17 Lollid 18 Skimp 20 Recap 22 Side

Fate hands Allenby scope to make Olympic point

David Powell talks to a woman out to win approval for her sport

IF Kate Allenby succeeds in retaining her British modern pentathlon title in Bracknell this weekend, it will be a triumph for improvisation. She hopes, too, that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) might be impressed by how determined women from the field of modern pentathlon are.

Allenby, 22, a fitness consultant from Reading, has seized on the chance to build a political platform out of her misfortune. She has sprained her left wrist and, after deciding that she will improvise on Saturday using her untrained right hand, she telephoned several national newspapers yesterday to tell her story because "modern pentathlon is a minority sport and we do not get much coverage". It was also a chance to score a point on behalf of women.

Tetrahlon is modern pentathlon minus the riding, a combination of fencing, shooting, swimming and running. Allenby, the 1996 World

Cup bronze medal-winner, has but one ambition — Olympic gold. Except that modern pentathlon is, and always has been, an Olympic sport for men only.

"It has military origins and the men have been competing in the Games since 1912," Allenby said. "Women have been competing internationally only since 1976. We have had to prove that we can compete at what is deemed Olympic level. I feel we have done that. It is just persuading the powers that be. At the moment, the word on the street is quite positive."

Allenby was on her way to training a month ago when she slipped on ice and sprained her wrist. Since then she has learnt to fence with her right hand, determined to

compete because performances count towards selection for the world championships. Such is the world last year, she is aiming higher.

Whether the right hand knows what the left hand has been doing remains open to question. "It is going to be tricky because fencing is one of my strongest skills and I pick up a lot of points on my fellow athletes," Allenby said. "I am not as co-ordinated with my right hand, but, once you have learnt the basic moves, it is quite easy to transfer it to the other side."

Allenby estimates that she is "70 per cent as good" with her right hand. "Normally, I would hope to be leading after the fencing, but I would settle for the top five this Saturday," she said. "There will be a lot more pressure on me in the other events to pull back the points."

"I have had more time on my hands because I have not been fencing, so I have been training more in the other events. I cannot twist my wrist, but I can keep it straight, which is why the shooting is not going to be a problem."

Given the IOC's reluctance to admit women modern pentathletes, surely Allenby must be tempted to move into triathlon? A combination of swimming, cycling and running, it makes its Olympic debut for men and women, at Sydney 2000. She is not keen.

"It works differently from modern pentathlon because it is a very endurance-based sport," Allenby said. "I would have to change a lot of my training and learn to ride a bike. Then, as she intends to prove with her right hand on Saturday, she learns quickly,

Universities unite in Boat Race declaration

By MIKE ROSEWELL

WITH the crews for the 1997 Boat Race scheduled to be announced on Monday, the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Clubs issued a "Joint Understanding" yesterday to counter the comments in recent years concerning the scholarships being offered to attract oarsmen to the respective camps.

The "understanding", set up by the two treasurers, Miles Mortland, of Oxford, and John Marks, of Cambridge, "reaffirms the Clubs' determination that the Boat Race shall comply with the highest standards of amateur sportsmanship and that any differences shall be settled privately between the Clubs."

A Boat Race panel, of the two treasurers and one senior old Blue from each university, will arbitrate and give guidance on disputed matters, particularly on admissions which "shall be strictly in accordance with the stipulated procedure of each university. No financial support of any kind shall be given to crew members by the Clubs or those associated with them."

Marks said: "There has been a lot of nagging on both sides in recent years. The competition on the water has been superb. We do not want battles off the water."

Established scholarships, such as the Rhodes at Oxford, and the Commonwealth at Cambridge, will remain, since they both have strong academic components. The Alf Twinn Bursary, introduced at Cambridge four years ago to finance oarsmen and objected to by Oxford, will disappear.

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